



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

**Brisbane Tattersall's Club: Change and Continuity, Success and
Survival (1883 – 2015)**

Alexander Lister

BA History (Hons)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy at

The University of Queensland in 2018

School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry

Abstract

Tattersall's is a private, male-only membership club located in the heart of the Brisbane central business district. It was formally established in 1883 by a group of prominent local businessmen involved in the thoroughbred horseracing industry in Queensland. Since that time, the Club has grown alongside the city and state, and is today made up of a 5,000-strong membership spanning multiple professions, commerce, government and sports.

This thesis assesses how the identity of Tattersall's Club has changed from its traditional roots in thoroughbred racing to its modern, more corporate character of today. It is arranged into three sections that highlight how change has been an important element of Tattersall's since 1883, but one that has been finely balanced with a strong sense of continuity in many Club traditions. For instance, although thoroughbred horseracing has become less central to the character of Tattersall's, the Club still holds four race meetings of its own each year. Similarly, while the Club underwent a significant redevelopment in the 1990s to provide new facilities that included a mixed dining room, function rooms and a health centre, its original Club Room (built in 1926) and Dining Hall (1939) remain largely unchanged and essential components of the Club today.

The thesis argues that it is this balance between change and continuity that has enabled Tattersall's to survive and prosper up until the present day, as it has maintained a clear loyalty to its traditions but has consistently and successfully sought ways in which to progress. While the ability to adapt and evolve has been integral to Tattersall's, it is as much the enduring trait of friendship within the Club over successive generations that has been crucial to its survival. It is also arguably the Club's defining feature.

On a simpler level, this thesis tells the story of one of Brisbane's most iconic and historical institutions, recording its personalities and anecdotes while highlighting significant landmarks in its history and character.

Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

I acknowledge that an electronic copy of my thesis must be lodged with the University Library and, subject to the policy and procedures of The University of Queensland, the thesis be made available for research and study in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968 unless a period of embargo has been approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

I acknowledge that copyright of all material contained in my thesis resides with the copyright holder(s) of that material. Where appropriate I have obtained copyright permission from the copyright holder to reproduce material in this thesis.

Publications during candidature

No publications.

Publications included in this thesis

No publications included.

Contributions by others to the thesis

No contributions by others.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

None.

Acknowledgements

At the University of Queensland, I thank both my principal supervisor Dr Geoff Ginn and associate supervisor Graeme Were for their advice and support throughout the project. They were both a pleasure to work with. I know that both Beck Hurst and Sarina Hobbin worked very hard to make this project possible in the first instance – thank you. Judy King was extremely helpful from day one and I really appreciated her continuous assistance. I would also like to thank Patrick Jory for the teaching opportunities and additional advice. The University itself supported my studies in awarding a scholarship that was crucial to the undertaking – for that, and its beautiful surroundings, I will be forever grateful.

I utilised the excellent archival collection relating to Tattersall's Club at the John Oxley Library within the State Library of Queensland. My thanks go to Dianne Byrne, who helped curate the collection and offered support whenever I was there, and to the various staff members who regularly assisted in assembling specific materials.

I would of course like to thank Tattersall's Club. Not only did the Club provide the financial support to enable the project to take place, but from my arrival in Brisbane I found its staff, Committee and membership to be very welcoming and supportive. I was granted access to the Club's exclusive premises and archives, and entrusted with a great responsibility in recording its history. I particularly thank Jonathan Cauldwell, who was not only a constant source of information, but also friendship. Jonathan also kindly allowed me to share his office for two years. Committeeman and Vice President (2015) Michael Cassidy championed the project originally and remained supportive throughout. The Heritage sub-club displayed constant enthusiasm towards the history of Tattersall's and I always found its members to be very hospitable. Dr Michael O'Shea was particularly helpful and is an asset to the Club. Lastly, former CEO Paul Jones offered support and insight throughout the project, and his knowledge and love of the Club was both informative and infectious. I especially wish to thank the various Club presidents, committeemen, members and staff (past and present) who agreed to be interviewed. They all shared invaluable insight and injected a real sense of perspective and personality into the history of Tattersall's Club.

I was fortunate enough to receive the constant support of family and friends both in Australia and back home in the UK. This made the undertaking considerably easier. Overall, it has been a challenging but fantastic experience. I feel I have learnt so much, and I will always look back on my time at both UQ and Tattersall's with great fondness.

Keywords

tattersall's, members, club, history, brisbane, identity, change, continuity, friendship.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)

210303, Australian History, 50%

210304, Biography, 40%

210399, Historical Studies not elsewhere classified, 10%

Fields of Research (FoR) Classification

2103, Historical Studies, 100%

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| List of Figures | <i>ix</i> |
| List of Abbreviations used in the thesis | <i>xi</i> |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Prologue | 8 |
| Part One: The First 100 Years (1883 – 1983) | 24 |
| Chapter 1: Relationship with the Queensland Thoroughbred Industry | 24 |
| i) A racing club and a racecourse | 24 |
| ii) Bookmaking and arbitration | 32 |
| iii) Settling Day | 37 |
| iv) Raiders of the Arcade | 42 |
| v) Tattersall's Racing Club and the Totalisator Administration Board | 50 |
| vi) The decline in Tattersall's racing identity | 55 |
| Chapter 2: Changing Premises | 60 |
| i) The early homes of Tattersall's Club | 60 |
| ii) Finalising the move | 64 |
| iii) A new home | 67 |
| iv) The Dining Hall | 77 |
| v) Further additions to enduring premises | 83 |
| Chapter 3: Activities and Hospitality | 88 |
| i) Games and gambling | 88 |
| ii) Subsidiary clubs | 93 |
| iii) The Tattersall's luncheon | 100 |
| iv) Smoke concerts | 105 |
| v) Dinner-dances | 109 |
| vi) Other events amid a changing society | 112 |
| vii) Hospitality | 115 |
| Part One: Conclusion | 123 |
| Part Two: The Tattersall's Club Redevelopment (1984 – 1997) | 127 |
| Chapter 4: Process | 127 |
| i) The need for change | 128 |
| ii) Increasing membership fees | 130 |
| iii) Establishing a two-stage plan | 132 |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------------|
| iv) | Property acquisition | 140 |
| v) | Ascot Chambers | 143 |
| vi) | Financing Stage Two | 146 |
| vii) | Membership support | 149 |
| viii) | Building, design and opening | 153 |
| Chapter 5: Performance | | 158 |
| i) | A new manager | 159 |
| ii) | An enduring luncheon tradition | 162 |
| iii) | Functions old and new | 167 |
| iv) | Racing revitalised | 174 |
| v) | Problems amid progress | 176 |
| Part Two: Conclusion | | 178 |
| Part Three: Tattersall's in the Twenty-First Century (1998 – 2015) | | 182 |
| Chapter 6: The Female Membership Debate | | 184 |
| i) | Context | 185 |
| ii) | The redevelopment | 187 |
| iii) | The first and second votes | 189 |
| iv) | The third vote | 191 |
| v) | Why did the third vote fail? | 195 |
| vi) | Aftermath and legacy | 197 |
| Chapter 7: Challenge and Response | | 202 |
| i) | Finance | 202 |
| ii) | Leadership | 208 |
| iii) | Events | 213 |
| iv) | Dining | 220 |
| v) | Functions | 224 |
| vi) | Subsidiary clubs | 227 |
| vii) | Racing | 235 |
| Part Three: Conclusion | | 244 |
| Epilogue | | 248 |
| List of References | | 252 |

List of Figures

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Figure 1 | Tattersall's 1887-88 racing ticket, 2014. | 26 |
| Figure 2 | 1886 Tattersall's Cup, 2014. | 26 |
| Figure 3 | Letter demonstrating Club's arbitration, 1893. | 34 |
| Figure 4 | Bookmakers' advertisements, 1930. | 36 |
| Figure 5 | Settling Day in the Club Room, 1926. | 39 |
| Figure 6 | Crowd during police raid of the Arcade, 1926. | 48 |
| Figure 7 | First meeting of the TAB at Tattersall's, 1962. | 53 |
| Figure 8 | Bookmakers at Albion Park, 1932. | 59 |
| Figure 9 | Australian Hotel, 1885. | 61 |
| Figure 10 | Tattersall's members at 227 Queen Street, 1903. | 62 |
| Figure 11 | Thomas Hall and George Prentice, 1926. | 66 |
| Figure 12 | Tattersall's Club, Edward Street frontage, 1925-26. | 68 |
| Figure 13 | Edward and Queen Street Arcade entrances, c.1950. | 69 |
| Figure 14 | Daphne Mayo's frieze, 1993. | 69 |
| Figure 15 | Club Room from south balcony, 1926. | 70 |
| Figure 16 | Club Room bar, 1926. | 71 |
| Figure 17 | Billiard Room, 1926. | 72 |
| Figure 18 | President's Chair, 2014. | 73 |
| Figure 19 | Club Room from north balcony, 1926. | 74 |
| Figure 20 | Tattersall's Committee, 1926. | 76 |
| Figure 21 | Illustration of the new Dining Hall, 1938. | 78 |
| Figure 22 | Dining Hall, 1939. | 79 |
| Figure 23 | Dining Hall, c.1950. | 80 |
| Figure 24 | Sections of the four mural paintings, 2015. | 81 |
| Figure 25 | Queen Street façade, c.1950. | 83 |
| Figure 26 | Tattersall's Club, 1983. | 87 |
| Figure 27 | Betting machine at Tattersall's, 2016. | 91 |
| Figure 28 | Indoor bowls rink / Club Room, c.1968. | 92 |
| Figure 29 | Tattersall's Bowling Club, 1928. | 93 |
| Figure 30 | Tattersall's golfers, 1939. | 95 |
| Figure 31 | Backseaters vs. Women's team, 1938. | 96 |
| Figure 32 | Backseaters' blazer presentation, 1951. | 97 |
| Figure 33 | Early Dining Hall menus, 1939-53. | 102 |

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Figure 34 | Smoke Concert crowd, 1931. | 107 |
| Figure 35 | Secretary Ron Clelland, c. late-1970s. | 109 |
| Figure 36 | The Daisy McLean Trio, c. late-1970s. | 111 |
| Figure 37 | Bert Hinkler's whisky, 2014. | 117 |
| Figure 38 | Governor's Dinner, c. late-1970s. | 120 |
| Figure 39 | Arcade entrance (Queen Street), c.1980 and 2015. | 137 |
| Figure 40 | Centre of the new Arcade, 2015. | 138 |
| Figure 41 | Arcade from Edward Street entrance, 2008. | 138 |
| Figure 42 | Entrance to Tattersall's Club, 1993. | 139 |
| Figure 43 | Redevelopment plans, 1991. | 141 |
| Figure 44 | Ascot Chambers, 1925. | 144 |
| Figure 45 | Model of Stage Two building, 1994. | 152 |
| Figure 46 | Turning the first sod / demolished corner site, 1995. | 154 |
| Figure 47 | Completed new building, 1997. | 155 |
| Figure 48 | Healy Room, 1997. | 156 |
| Figure 49 | Function Room, 1997. | 156 |
| Figure 50 | Accommodation, 1997. | 157 |
| Figure 51 | Swimming Pool, 1997. | 157 |
| Figure 52 | CEO Paul Jones, c.1990s. | 160 |
| Figure 53 | Club Room gilded ceiling, 2015. | 162 |
| Figure 54 | Members' Dining Room (Dining Hall), 2012. | 166 |
| Figure 55 | Chandelier Room, 1994. | 170 |
| Figure 56 | Landscape Art Prize, 2001. | 172 |
| Figure 57 | Newspaper reports, 2003-06. | 201 |
| Figure 58 | Ten Tenors at Tatts evening, 1999. | 215 |
| Figure 59 | US Independence Luncheon, 2001. | 216 |
| Figure 60 | Black-Tie Boxing, 2008. | 218 |
| Figure 61 | Melbourne Cup Luncheon, 2009. | 219 |
| Figure 62 | Virginia Jenson in the Healy Room, 2001. | 221 |
| Figure 63 | Golf / Bowls clubs, 2014. | 227 |
| Figure 64 | TMC, Shooters and Rowing clubs, 2006-15. | 229 |
| Figure 65 | Tattersall's Club logos (no date). | 230 |
| Figure 66 | Colts Snooker Tournament, 2014. | 231 |
| Figure 67 | Shooters event, 2015. | 233 |
| Figure 68 | Racing heritage, 2017. | 243 |

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| APC | Australian Pattern Committee |
| BATC | Brisbane Amateur Turf Club |
| BRC | Brisbane Racing Club |
| BTC | Brisbane Turf Club |
| CBD | Central Business District |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| Co. | Company |
| CQRA | Central Queensland Racing Association |
| GFC | Global Financial Crisis |
| LNP | Liberal National Party |
| MLA | Member of the Legislative Assembly |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NAB | National Australia Bank |
| NAJC | North Australian Jockey Club |
| NQRA | North Queensland Racing Association |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| QPC | Queensland Principal Club |
| QTC | Queensland Turf Club |
| RAAF | Royal Australian Air Force |
| SLQ | State Library of Queensland |
| TCAR | Tattersall's Club Annual Report |
| TCM | Tattersall's Club Minutes |
| TMC | Tattersall's Motorcycle Club |
| TRC | Tattersall's Racing Club |
| TRCAR | Tattersall's Racing Club Annual Report |
| UQ | University of Queensland |
| US | United States (of America) |

Introduction

Tattersall's is a private, male-only membership club located in the heart of the Brisbane central business district (CBD). It was formally established in 1883 by a group of prominent local businessmen who shared a keen interest and involvement within the thoroughbred horseracing industry in Queensland. While some consider 1865 to be the year of the Club's establishment, it more accurately represents the first known incarnation of Tattersall's in Brisbane. It is the Club that formed in 1883 that has existed continuously until the present day and therefore, in the opinion of the author, 1883 reflects the year in which Tattersall's was founded. The Club has since grown alongside the city and state, and is today made up of a 5,000-strong membership spanning multiple professions, commerce, government and sports. Since its inception, Tattersall's has belonged to its members who each pay entrance and annual subscription fees. It is managed by an elected committee, which appoints a chief executive officer (CEO) – formerly secretary – to oversee the day-to-day running of the Club in line with its directives. The Committee itself acts on behalf of the Club membership.

This thesis records the history of Tattersall's Club and explores its transformation in character, from its traditional roots in thoroughbred racing to the more modern and commercial operation of today. The central argument is that the Club has balanced both change and continuity throughout its history, and that this has enabled it to consistently thrive for well over a century. The thesis is the result of a collaboration between Tattersall's Club and the University of Queensland (UQ) that has taken the form of a two-year Master of Philosophy (MPhil) postgraduate degree, during which the Club provided an annual stipend in support of the author. The thesis is intended to complement and add to the existing literature regarding the history of Tattersall's, most notably the book *Friendship is Life* (1993), researched and written by eminent Queensland historian Robert Longhurst. Less extensive publications that chart the Club's history include commemorative booklets published in-house throughout the twentieth century, such as *Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Souvenir and Retrospect* (1926), which marked the opening of the Club's Edward Street premises; *Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Anniversary Celebration* (1951), which honoured the twenty-fifth anniversary of the same opening; and, particularly, *Tattersall's Club Centenary* (1983), which was researched and compiled by former Tattersall's life member, historian and *Brisbane Telegraph* journalist Bill Boyan in celebration of the Club's first 100 years.

More recently, a small pilot study was undertaken in 2013 by two UQ Arts undergraduates, Olivia Johnson and Brendan Walsh, which explored the 1990s' redevelopment of the Club.

These works have been excellent sources pertaining to the history of Tattersall's Club. In particular, Longhurst's *Friendship is Life* has been an invaluable point of reference, and it is unlikely that it will ever be surpassed in terms of its detail and meticulousness. For the purpose of comparison, and to gain an understanding of other prominent private institutions in Brisbane, several other club histories were also consulted: *The Queensland Club: 1859 – 1959* (1966) by Joshua Peter Bell; *The Queensland Club: Sesquicentenary 1859 – 2009* (2009) by John McNeil Campbell; *The Brisbane Club* (1980) by Malcolm I. Thomis; and *Queensland Turf Club: A Place in History* (2009) by Helen Coughlan. These have all proven useful histories and are a credit to their respective clubs, while the latter also provided an excellent insight into the early years and subsequent development of the Brisbane turf scene. To further my appreciation of the history of gentlemen's clubs in a more general sense – as in the English model of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – Ralph Nevill's *London Clubs: Their History and Treasures* (1911) offered an excellent starting point. More recent works such as *A Room of His Own* (2012) by Barbara Black and *London Clubland* (2011) by Amy Milne-Smith – both relating to Victorian clubland – outlined a skilful and welcome juxtaposition of the various clubs and their position in a literary-cultural context.

Other key consultations related more specifically to the development of thoroughbred racing in Queensland. To this end, *The Genesis of Sport in Queensland* (1992), by Reet A. Howell and Maxwell L. Howell, provided a clear introduction and overview; *Gamblers' Paradise* (1996), issued by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland and edited by John Kerr, outlined the history and key developments in betting on racing within Queensland succinctly – particularly the respective chapters by John O'Hara and Kay Cohen; while *Harking Back – The Turf: Its Men and Memories* (1924), written by James L. Collins and Geoff H. Thompson, offered a colourful account of the early days of the Queensland turf. To help provide a more general sense of context, several key histories relating to the state of Queensland itself were also consulted. These included *A History of Queensland* (2007) by Raymond Evans, and *Made in Queensland* (2009) by Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity and David Symons. To delve deeper into Brisbane's late nineteenth century development, Ronald Lawson's *Brisbane in the 1890s* (1973) was also very useful.

While there were clear benefits gained from such secondary works, I have tried to base the research here on as much primary source material as possible. The State Library of Queensland (SLQ) holds extensive archives pertaining to Tattersall's, while many items are also housed within the Club itself. Minute books – which predominantly transcribe monthly Committee meetings along with annual and special Club meetings – exist for the 1890s, the 1920s, and from the late 1980s to the present. Annual reports have also proven useful in charting the Club's development, with a complete collection available from 1960 until the present. Some of the earlier annual reports have also survived and provide insight into particular years between 1890 and 1929. Another source of value has been the numerous surviving editions of *The Tattler*. This began in 1960 as a weekly (sometimes bi-weekly) typed newsletter that provided reports and notices regarding Club life and membership. The format continued until 1991, before relaunching as a more modern quarterly magazine in 1993 with extended features. *The Tattler* has proven a useful source in charting the progress of Tattersall's, with an array of updates, reports and contemporary quotes from key figures of the Club often included. Other interesting and beneficial sources in the archives – from building blueprints to countless photographs – have further assisted my understanding and appreciation of Tattersall's development and history.

Historical newspaper reports also provided a great deal of information. Tattersall's received regular coverage within the press, especially during its earlier years, and much material has been collected from newspaper articles that is unavailable elsewhere. The National Library of Australia website Trove (trove.nla.gov.au/) features a vast collection of digitised national and regional newspapers for the years between 1800 and 1956 (at the time of research) and, as such, has provided a remarkably extensive body of information relating to the Club. This has been complemented by three scrapbooks compiled by former Tattersall's members (held at the SLQ) consisting of well-selected articles relating to the Club. In most cases, the newspaper and relevant page numbers have been sourced via Trove, though instances remain where the reference has had to be left incomplete.

In addition, much of the Club's recent history has been traced orally. I have conducted over twenty interviews with former Club presidents, committeemen, key members and staff. These have been supplemented by several interviews with other prominent Tattersall's personalities conducted by Helen Gregory (in 1991) and John McCoy (2006). The interviews

have all provided invaluable insight into the life and progress of the Club and have often lent both personality and an authoritative voice to proceedings. However, while each individual I have spoken to has been fair-minded and willing to assist the research, interviews can be problematic as a source. There needs to be some awareness of the natural tendency to present oneself, or the Club – or both – in the best possible light. Furthermore, memory itself is not always the most accurate tool. Although I have tried to use the material sourced from interviews appropriately, the complete context of the discussion is inevitably absent. Most of the interviews conducted were quite extensive, and usually only a fraction of the conversation is highlighted. In addition, there is the issue of the many individuals and voices connected to the history of Tattersall's that remain unheard, not only those lost to the past but also many in the present. There was simply not enough time and space to interview everyone, while it was also important to avoid too many competing voices. This does mean, however, that the recollections of many prominent individuals remain unrecorded.

In relation to other primary material, much of the Club's own records – annual reports, minute books, *The Tattler* – can clearly be viewed as one-sided accounts relating to Tattersall's. They were also predominantly compiled by the Club's leadership and naturally fall short of speaking for an entire membership. There are also limitations as to what they can offer. One former committeeman who I interviewed commented that 'annual reports are skin deep and it's all glossed over – nothing of meaning will be discussed.'¹ Although the reports carry some invaluable information – for instance the professionally audited financial data relating to the Club – there is some truth to the remark. Similarly, in his history of the Queensland Club, Bell noted that 'minute books contain about as much human interest and insight into personality as a railway timetable.'² While the older Tattersall's minutes are at times quite colourful and detailed, the comment is not completely devoid of accuracy. It is worth noting that the oral interviews could complement or contradict such sources – and, of course, one another – but often, rather usefully, they also helped to fill in some of the gaps.

There are other areas where evidence is insufficient. Practically all the data suffers in the sense that private clubs, by their very nature, are often shrouded in a strong sense of

¹ Interview with Michael Sparksman, conducted by the author, 11 August 2015. Note: After the first reference to a particular interview, written out in full as above, subsequent references will be shortened to the interviewee's surname and the year in which the interview took place (e.g. Sparksman, 2015).

² Joshua Peter Bell, *Queensland Club 1859 – 1959* (Brisbane: The Queensland Club, 1966), vii.

secrecy. In some instances, possibly more because of inadequate record-keeping or care of artefacts, even basic information is absent. For example, historical demographic data regarding the members is scarce, aside from a few surviving early membership rolls (all pre-1930) which record the occupations of some members, and databases relating to the more recent membership. There are very few Club records at all representing the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s – decades in which newspaper articles have become even more imperative. Of course, newspapers themselves are not always entirely reliable. In 2006, veteran journalist and Tattersall's member Glyn May recalled working at the *Brisbane Telegraph* in the 1940s and 1950s, under then Chief of Staff Bill Boyan: 'Bill sometimes came back from drinks at Tatts with a snippet of gossip that, often to his dismay, developed into top news stories – usually with a liberal dose of embellishment from his staff, including myself.'³

Beyond issues of reliability and absence in terms of evidence – and the inconsistencies that can appear between sources, to which I have tried to make a balanced judgement – there are a few other important points to consider regarding this research. Firstly, it should be acknowledged that Part One covers much of the same period as Longhurst's work. Rather than simply replicating *Friendship is Life*, I have made a concerted effort to use as many alternative sources as possible while attempting to frame the research in a different way. This leads to a second point, in that Longhurst had the relative freedom of putting together an entire book, whereas this research is limited to the confines of an academic thesis, while also trying to cover a more extensive period in bringing the Club's history up to date. Naturally, I cannot include everything, and some omissions are as necessary as they are unfortunate. Thirdly, although there is a strong degree of independence in the research, the project remains industry-sponsored. As such, some matters have been handled with what might be considered a heightened sense of respect to the Club. Ultimately, the thesis could not exist without Tattersall's cooperation and support. This also ties in to the final point. While the importance of contextualisation is not lost, it takes a somewhat secondary emphasis at times to that of the Club itself. It is the story of Tattersall's which is the most important feature here and, owing to the wide array of Club sources and the depth of its history, I make no apologies for adopting a fairly inward focus.

³ *The Tattler*, Winter 2006.

Following a prologue, which introduces several key areas of context that relate to both the formation of the Club and the overall discussion, the thesis is divided into three sections:

Part One: The First 100 Years (1883 – 1983) looks back over the Club's first 100 years and begins by exploring its close relationship and involvement with the Queensland thoroughbred industry. While this endured, along with a strong sporting tradition, Tattersall's also became more of a social club for a growing body of city professionals and accommodated a diversifying range of interests and activities, best exemplified in the introduction of subsidiary clubs and a growing calendar of social events. A sense of transformation and progress was also apparent in the Club's changing homes and facilities, which often symbolised and facilitated further evolution in the Club's identity.

Part Two: The Tattersall's Club Redevelopment (1984 – 1997) charts the redevelopment of the Club premises during the 1990s. This involved the construction of a new building (which opened in 1997) to include a mixed fine-dining restaurant, function rooms to cater for over 300 patrons, eighteen rooms of accommodation, a fully-equipped gymnasium, twenty-five metre indoor swimming pool, library and administration offices. Tattersall's Arcade, which has been in operation under the Club since 1924, also underwent a major renovation in 1991. The process in achieving this change – arguably the most significant in the Club's history – and the reasons behind it are explored, as is the character and performance of Tattersall's during a notable period of transition.

Part Three: Tattersall's in the Twenty-First Century (1998 – 2015) studies the modern-day Tattersall's Club. It assesses the recent difficulties that have confronted the Club and its leadership, and the impact of the redevelopment upon the Club's operation. Challenges have included the management of substantial debt associated with the redevelopment, competing in an increasingly competitive hospitality market, and negative membership trends. Tattersall's attempts to address these issues, from further enhancing the expertise and professionalism within its leadership to optimising the Club's commercial potential, are explored and evaluated. The contentious issue of female membership is also addressed, as the Club attempted to define its role in modern society.

Each of these sections highlight that change has been an important element of Tattersall's enduring existence since 1883, but one that has been finely balanced with a strong sense of

continuity in many Club traditions. For instance, although thoroughbred horseracing has become less central to the character of Tattersall's, the Club still holds four race meetings of its own each year, while its premises remain adorned with racing memorabilia. More broadly, at various stages throughout its history Tattersall's has accurately – and sometimes concurrently – been referred to as a betting, racing, bookmakers', sporting, social, luncheon, and businessmen's club, while it has also shared many characteristics of the traditional gentlemen's club. Although the ability to adapt has been integral to the success of Tattersall's, it is as much the enduring trait of friendship within the Club over successive generations that has been crucial to its survival. It is also arguably its defining feature.

The thesis contends that it is this balance between change and continuity that has enabled Tattersall's to survive and prosper into the twenty-first century, as it has been able to consistently evolve while maintaining a clear loyalty to its identity and ideals. This argument has been central to the survival of many clubs and institutions. As Milne-Smith points out in the emergence and evolution of the Victorian English gentlemen's clubs: 'They adapted to the needs of their society...Thus, while clubmen often railed against change, it was that very adaptability that helped clubs thrive with each successive generation.'⁴ In his history of the Queensland Club, Bell speaks of clubs that 'have moved along with the larger world outside them' and shown the 'ability to adjust themselves without the sacrifice of their basic concept.'⁵ Ultimately, however, this thesis simply tells the story of one of Brisbane's most iconic and historical institutions, recording its personalities and anecdotes while highlighting significant landmarks in its history and character, and offers an explanation as to how it has survived and prospered into the present day.

Note on currency: Currency in Australia was sterling pounds, shillings and pence from the colonial era until 1966. Twelve pence (d) made a shilling (s), and twenty shillings made a pound (£). One guinea was equal to £1.1s. One sovereign carried a nominal value of £1. The Australian Pound was introduced in 1910 and was distinct from sterling in value from 1931 (following devaluation). On 14 February 1966, decimal currency (under the Australian Dollar) was introduced, with two dollars equalling one pound at the time.

Note on Queensland: The area of Queensland was separated from New South Wales on 10 December 1859 and was subsequently known as the Colony of Queensland. It then became a state following the Federation of Australia on 1 January 1901. As such, it is referred to as a colony before January 1901, and a state thereafter.

⁴ Amy Milne-Smith, *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 18.

⁵ Bell, *Queensland Club*, 2.

Prologue

The purpose of this preliminary section is to introduce several key areas of context that relate to both the thesis in general and the formation of Brisbane Tattersall's Club. These topics of discussion include: the concept of the gentlemen's club; the origins and use of the Tattersall's name; the early development of the thoroughbred racing industry in Queensland; and, finally, the formative incarnations of Tattersall's clubs that existed in Brisbane prior to the Club's ultimate establishment in 1883.

The Gentlemen's Club

In 1764, a popular London coffee house called Tom's was converted into a club upon the introduction of an annual subscription of one guinea. Landlords had seen the advantage of setting apart rooms for privileged customers who desired a more closed community. Tom's was just one of 2,000 coffee houses in the English capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of which every profession, trade, class and political affiliation had a favourite.¹ White's, one of the most exclusive gentlemen's clubs still in existence, was originally founded as a hot chocolate emporium in Mayfair in 1693 before moving to St James's Street in 1778. Along with Boodle's (established 1762), Brooks' (1764) and Arthur's (1811), White's helped to create the area known as 'clubland' in London's West End.² Following a surge in popularity during the nineteenth century – particularly the latter part – it is estimated that there were up to 400 clubs in London by 1900, with perhaps seventy-five holding the distinction of being 'gentlemen's clubs.' Around thirty of the most prominent formed the upper echelons of clubland across Pall Mall, St James's and Piccadilly.³

The term 'gentlemen' lost its ties to the gentry, landed property and the right to bear arms in the early 1800s. By the end of the century, any man with a public-school background – or 'who wore a bowler hat and did not work with his hands' – claimed the title, alongside many of the increasingly franchised. These men joined clubs for two principal reasons: personal enjoyment and status.⁴ The club was an escape from domestic boredom and responsibility,

¹ Ralph Nevill, *London Clubs: Their History and Treasury* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1911), 1-3.

² *Ibid.*, 63.

³ Milne-Smith, *London Clubland*, 28; Barbara Black, *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 8-9.

⁴ Milne-Smith, *London Clubland*, 6-8.

and a chance to ‘enjoy pleasures and mischief behind closed doors among loyal brothers.’⁵ A culture of professional networking, public debating and news gathering could be identified within most Victorian gentlemen’s clubs, but the real focus was often drinking, dining and gambling. This facilitated male bonding – and in many ways represented an extension of the public school culture into adulthood – within a welcoming ‘home away from home’ environment.⁶ Naturally, the dual-appeal of comfort and privacy was assisted by a club’s exclusivity, and it was not uncommon for men to put their sons on the candidates’ list of their favourite club the day they were born.⁷ This sense of status, along with the popularity of clubs – and their high level of sociability – exerted significant influence. In 1909, the eminent historian and novelist Sir Walter Besant affirmed that ‘without a doubt the greatest social force of modern times has been the club.’⁸

Clubs of Victorian London naturally evoke images of ‘cigar-smoke, mutton chops, and luxurious leather armchairs,’ as Milne-Smith highlights, but to define the club beyond this – and gain some sense of distinction – one can look to the origin and traditional character of particular gentlemen’s clubs.⁹ For example, the Athenaeum (1824) was established for men of science, literature and art, while the Reform (1836) was originally associated with supporters of the Reform Bill (i.e. the Whigs and an emerging Liberal Party). The Carlton (1832) was, in contrast, made up of Conservatives, the Travellers’ Club (1819) was for men who had travelled a minimum of 500-miles outside the British Isles, the United Services Club (1815) was founded for senior level military officers, while the likes of the Saville (1868) – for younger generations of literary men – and the Savage (1857) – for actors, musicians and artists – further diversified the scope of affiliation.¹⁰ While sporting clubs also possessed a strong social character, it was secondary to their function of regulating and facilitating their sport. The Jockey Club (1750), for instance, was an extremely aristocratic grouping of gentlemen passionate about horseracing. Although it predated most gentlemen’s clubs – and originally met in the area that became clubland – the Jockey Club’s primary focus was to

⁵ Black, *Victorian Clubland*, 34.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷ Milne-Smith, *London Clubland*, 6.

⁸ Walter Besant, *London in the Nineteenth-Century* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1909), 259 cited in Black, *Victorian Clubland*, 12.

⁹ Milne-Smith, *London Clubland*, 6-14.

¹⁰ Black, *Victorian Clubland*, 8-9.

provide leadership and organisation in thoroughbred racing throughout the country.¹¹ Writing in 1911, Nevill accurately stressed that it was ‘hardly a club in the same sense now understood,’ and this was a notable distinction.¹²

Naturally, each club has its own history, rules and customs, and this makes the gentlemen’s club difficult to define in a collective sense. While membership was, and often still is, bound together through associations of school, college, regiment, politics and sports, such separate allegiances could also exist within the same club.¹³ Clear differences in interests, class, prestige and exclusivity were also apparent among the Victorian clubs, while the character of a club could change over time. Nonetheless, there are some basic common features of the traditional gentlemen’s club that can be summarised. While some proprietary clubs existed – with a single owner of the property – most belonged to the membership (hence members’ clubs).¹⁴ Members paid annual subscription, and in most cases an entrance fee was also established. A club committee – including a president, vice president and treasurer – was usually elected from standing members, and acted on behalf of the membership in dictating the club’s principles, direction and management. The latter was entrusted to a paid or sometimes honorary secretary who, alongside staff, ran the club on a day-to-day basis.¹⁵

Members controlled their grouping by a nomination and selection process, with the membership or, increasingly, the committee making the final decision on a candidate. Blackballing, though supposedly rare, could take place for any number of reasons, from the trivial to the deeply personal. Usually one negative vote in ten would end an applicant’s chances, although blackballing became so extreme at White’s in 1833 that the Club’s rules had to be altered to prevent the almost constant exclusion of prospective members.¹⁶ Gender was also a defining feature within the club scene. Although women’s clubs had become more common by the end of the 1800s, when there were at least thirty in London, clubland remained a distinctly masculine space throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁷ Another important feature of the gentlemen’s club was the

¹¹ ‘Our Heritage,’ accessed 18 August 2017, <http://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk/about/our-heritage>.

¹² Nevill, *London Clubs*, 297.

¹³ Milne-Smith, *London Clubland*, 36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28-9.

¹⁵ Neville, *London Clubs*, 170.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 100; Milne-Smith, *London Clubland*, 46.

¹⁷ Black, *Victorian Clubland*, 229.

clubhouse itself, which was luxuriously decorated and nearly always featured a lounge or main clubroom, bar and dining area. Of course, the particulars of these generalities varied from club to club, but most can still be broadly applied to gentlemen's clubs existing today.

The cultural institution of the nineteenth century club was transported throughout the world, predominantly through the British Empire. In colonial Australia, settlers held on to their English traditions and, for those in the higher echelons of early society, clubs were a necessity. The Australian Club in Sydney – which remains the oldest gentlemen's club in the southern hemisphere – formed in May 1838 on the model of those in London's clubland. With an initial membership of 137, the Club was established 'for the purpose of facilitating the social and literary intercourse of individuals resident in the colony.'¹⁸ The Australian Club in Melbourne (1878) was just one of nine founded in the city during the nineteenth century.¹⁹ Nearer Brisbane, the North Australian Club (1857) was the first to form following the initial prominence of Ipswich in the region.²⁰ The Queensland Club was established in Brisbane on 6 December 1859, however – just days before the declaration of Queensland as a separate colony – and it quickly became the region's leading club.²¹ Among the Club's eminent graziers, businessmen and professionals were two-thirds of the upper houses of parliament by the late nineteenth century, and between 1879 and 1898 six colony premiers were Queensland Club presidents.²² By the beginning of the twentieth century, Brisbane had twelve registered clubs that included the Brisbane Club (1903), Commercial Travellers (1874), Johnsonian (1878), United Services (1892) and, of course, Tattersall's (1883).²³

The Tattersall's name

The Tattersall name derives from a man 'widely regarded as the father of modern thoroughbred racing.'²⁴ Richard Tattersall founded his horse-auction mart at Hyde Park Corner in London in 1766, and Tattersall's Repository quickly became the centre of the British racing industry. The arrangement of race meetings and the settlement of bets took place there, while the Jockey Club also established its headquarters on site. It was not

¹⁸ *Australian Club Centenary* (Sydney: John Andrew & Co., 1939), 3-7 (booklet, no author listed).

¹⁹ 'About Us,' accessed 28 May 2017, <https://theaustralianclub.com.au/eng/about-us/>.

²⁰ *Queensland Times*, 4 February 1953, 4.

²¹ Bell, *Queensland Club*, 8.

²² Ronald Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1973), 234-6.

²³ *Ibid.*; Malcolm I. Thomis, *The Brisbane Club* (Milton, Queensland: Jacaranda Press, 1980), 1.

²⁴ *The North-West Star* (Mount Isa), 22 February 1977, 16.

customary among gentlemen of the turf to pay out at the races, and for one guinea per annum they gained access to the subscription rooms added in 1780 – a process that paralleled the emerging club scene. These rooms further facilitated the making and settling of bets among the higher echelons of the racing fraternity, and quickly became the known rendezvous for sporting men. Betting had previously been an unsavoury experience for many, but the Tattersall's rooms encouraged a more regularised business. Tattersall himself, having previously served as stud groom to the second Duke of Kingston, had already built a reputation for honesty, fair dealing and sound judgement. He placed turf betting on a similar basis and provided the same solid foundations to bloodstock selling and breeding. He was also a successful owner in his own right, with his horse *Highflyer* becoming a twelve-time champion sire.²⁵ In racing circles, therefore, the name was synonymous with reliability. Following Richard's death in 1795, five generations of the family managed the enterprise before it was passed on to partners in 1942. Based in Newmarket, Tattersall's remains the largest bloodstock auctioneer in Europe (and the oldest in the world).²⁶

Given its considerable integrity, the Tattersall's name has been used freely although its connotations remain obvious. In Britain, there is the Tattersall's Ring – the principal betting enclosure of any racecourse on which meetings are held under Jockey Club Rules – and the Tattersalls Committee, which provides an independent resolution service for betting disputes.²⁷ In mid-nineteenth century Australia, the name lent itself to clubs in both Sydney and Melbourne, the former having opened Tattersall's subscription rooms in 1858 based on the English model.²⁸ In Queensland, it was adopted by hotels whose proprietors were often horse owners, such as those in Ipswich and Rockhampton in the early 1860s. Sales yards, notably William H. Kent's Tattersall's Horse Bazaar – established at the corner of Brisbane's Adelaide and Albert Streets in 1863 – also utilised the name. A Tattersall's subscription room began at the Clarendon Hotel in Ipswich, meanwhile, and though Brisbane's Sovereign Hotel set up a similar enterprise in December 1861, it had disappeared within two weeks.²⁹

²⁵ Wray Vamplew, 'Tattersall family,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 13 May 2017, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.uq.edu.au/view/article/64817>.

²⁶ 'About Tattersalls,' accessed 16 May 2017, <http://www.tattersalls.com/about-tatts.php>.

²⁷ Bill Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary: 1883 – 1983* (Brisbane: Courier-Mail Printing Service, 1983), 3; 'About Us,' accessed 13 May 2017, <http://www.tattersallscommittee.co.uk/42/about-us>.

²⁸ *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 8 May 1858, 2.

²⁹ Robert Longhurst, *Friendship is Life: A History of Tattersall's Club* (Brisbane: Tattersall's Club, 1993), 17.

In Australia today, the name is familiar beyond Brisbane Tattersall's and two clubs based in Sydney (a City Tattersall's Club also formed there in 1895). Numerous Tattersall's hotels remain throughout New South Wales (NSW), Queensland and Tasmania – the nineteenth century Tattersalls Hotel in Townsville, for instance, is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register.³⁰ However, the most well-known appropriation is Tatts Group, the nation's largest provider of wagering, lotteries and gaming services. The company's roots began in the late nineteenth century with George Adams, whose hotel in Sydney was the original meeting place of the Sydney Tattersall's Club. Members and hotel regulars subscribed to the race meeting sweepstakes run by Adams, and in 1881 he ran his first public sweep on the Sydney Cup. Adams christened his enterprise 'Tattersall's' and took 10% of the money pool for each sweep. These 'consultations' were hugely popular in NSW, until local legislation prohibited the delivery of letters containing sweep investments in 1892.³¹ After a couple of years in Queensland, further legislation forced the operation to Tasmania where its government welcomed the lotteries (and imposed a duty on every ticket issued). Tattersall's sweeps were reportedly trusted implicitly, and upon Adam's death in 1904 – when an estate was formed and continued to operate under the Tattersall's brand – it was suggested that he was one of the best-known figures in sporting circles throughout Australasia.³²

While the Tattersall's name has been widely used between various independent institutions – with or without the apparently optional apostrophe, or often shortened to Tatts – it is indelibly associated with thoroughbred racing and, in particular, the sense of trust and reliability that Richard Tattersall built his original concept upon.

The thoroughbred industry in colonial Queensland

Thoroughbred racing was one of the earliest forms of leisure and recreation among settlers in colonial Australia, with the first recognised race meeting taking place at Sydney's Hyde Park in October 1810. It was preceded by the colony's governor prohibiting 'all species of gaming, drunkenness, swearing, quarrelling, fighting or boxing taking place on or near the

³⁰ 'Tattersalls Hotel,' *Queensland Heritage Register*, accessed 23 May 2016, <https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600916>.

³¹ Decie Denholm, 'Adams, George (1839-1904),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/adams-george-2866>, accessed 15 May 2017.

³² *Queensland Times*, 27 September 1904, 10.

race ground,' which betrayed something of the convict character at the time.³³ Throughout the nineteenth century, the horse was important to daily life, and reverence was attached to its performance, endurance, speed and courage – qualities that racing offered owners and punters a chance to examine in organised competition. The races were a considerable social occasion for both leading citizens and poor colonists – who enjoyed the recreational respite from their daily tolls – and provided everybody with the opportunity to gamble.³⁴

Race meetings had taken place for many years in the region that became known as Queensland. In Brisbane, private street matches featured throughout the 1830s, while impromptu meetings held in bush paddocks in South Brisbane featured a slushy track marked out by saplings, with prizes including bags of flour or sugar.³⁵ The Moreton Bay Racing Club held what is generally considered to be the region's first organised race meeting at Coopers Plains in July 1843. This was only seventeen months after the Moreton Bay district officially opened to free settlers, following the closure of its penal station in 1839, which was testament to the popularity of horseracing.³⁶ By 1846, the annual races had moved to the area now known as New Farm Park.³⁷ As around half of the men of Moreton Bay and the Darling Downs were transportees, race days and wider society remained rough – racing was even temporarily halted in 1850 after violent clashes between the townspeople and squatters.³⁸ Nonetheless, the successful development of country racing sites such as Warwick (1851), Gayndah (1853), Dalby (1855), Tenterfield (1856), Goondiwindi (1858) and Toowoomba (1859) further highlighted the popularity of the sport throughout the region.³⁹

Perhaps owing to Brisbane's nature as a convict settlement – in addition to its relative inaccessibility from the Downs – Ipswich developed as the social and commercial centre for squatters in the colony, and became the focal point for Queensland's railway system in February 1864.⁴⁰ Unsurprisingly, Ipswich was also the hub for thoroughbred racing. The

³³ *Sydney Gazette*, 6 October 1810, 2.

³⁴ Reet A. Howell & Maxwell L. Howell, *The Genesis of Sport in Queensland* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1992), 26.

³⁵ John O'Hara, "Horseracing and Betting in Queensland," in *Gamblers' Paradise*, ed. John Kerr (Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 1996), 26; James L. Collins & Geoff H. Thompson, *Harking Back – The Turf: Its Men and Memories* (Brisbane: Standard Press, 1924), 24.

³⁶ Raymond Evans, *A History of Queensland* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xvii.

³⁷ *Moreton Bay Courier* (Brisbane), 20 June 1846, 2.

³⁸ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 2.

³⁹ Helen Coughlan, *Queensland Turf Club: A Place in History* (Brisbane: Boolarong Press, 2009), 3.

⁴⁰ Howell & Howell, *Sport in Queensland*, 79.

North Australian Jockey Club (NAJC) formed there in July 1852 and remained the premier racing club north of Sydney for the next two decades. The NAJC held race meetings every year including Queensland's first Intercolonial Champion Stakes in May 1861, which boasted prizemoney of £1,000 – ten times higher than the richest race in the region up to that point. Brisbane, by comparison, could only muster five race meetings between 1848 and 1861.⁴¹ An evening at the Sovereign Hotel in August 1863, however, marked the formation of the Queensland Turf Club (QTC) and, with it, the moment that 'racing in Brisbane really became established.'⁴² Among an initial membership of fifty-three, the Club's first chairman was Colonel M. C. O'Connell, who was President of the Queensland Legislative Council. O'Connell epitomised the involvement of leading citizens in guiding thoroughbred racing in Brisbane and the wider colony, and he was duly succeeded by a continuous stream of elite individuals from business, law and politics.⁴³ The QTC had clear aims to improve the organisation and quality of thoroughbred racing in the region, and naturally wanted to establish itself as the principal racing club in Queensland.

Eagle Farm racecourse – then often referred to as Ascot or 'headquarters' – was established after the QTC received a government grant of 322-acres of land for racing purposes. A grandstand and saddling paddock were erected before the QTC's inaugural race meeting between 14 and 16 August 1865.⁴⁴ The occasion typified the carnival atmosphere of the colony's early race days with its shooting galleries and stalls of English hams and assorted cheeses, in addition to a small menagerie that included monkeys, a Tasmanian Devil and even a lion.⁴⁵ In addition to calls advertising sweeps – 'fifteen tickets at a bob, ten-bob for the winner!' – there were numerous so-called 'games of chance' including thimble and pea, cheap jack, and the duck raffle.⁴⁶ The race meeting was successful with around 3,000 attendees, and confirmed Eagle Farm as a new centre of racing in Queensland.⁴⁷

Upon the declaration of Queensland on 10 December 1859, Brisbane's population stood at around 5,000 – with fourteen churches, twelve pubs and twelve police officers – and it

⁴¹ John O'Hara, "Horseracing and Betting in Queensland," 26-7.

⁴² Coughlan, *Queensland Turf Club*, 5; Collins & Thompson, *Harking Back*, 30.

⁴³ *Cavalcade of Queensland Sport: 1901 – 1951* (Brisbane: Merchandising Services, 1951), 29.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Howell & Howell, *Sport in Queensland*, 109.

⁴⁶ Collins & Thompson, *Harking Back*, 26.

⁴⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 3 August 1865, 5

remained a frontier settlement over the next two decades.⁴⁸ While more than 114,000 people arrived into the new colony from Britain and Europe between 1860 and 1879 – mostly through assisted migration – Brisbane’s population remained under 30,000 for much of the 1870s.⁴⁹ Similarly, despite its many years of popularity, thoroughbred racing in Brisbane and the wider region was still very much developing. For many years the QTC ran just one race meeting per year, while there was no definitive process in place for the proper regulation and control of the sport to uphold its integrity. In 1875, the QTC established its own set of racing rules and, although these were only for meetings at Eagle Farm, they at least provided some standardisation on the racecourse – though not off it.⁵⁰

Although Queensland (and particularly Brisbane) suffered economic depression in the early 1870s – largely due to widespread drought – the potential for recovery and growth was facilitated by such enterprises as British mining and pastoral investment, and characterised by the establishment of the Queensland National Bank in 1872. Sudden townships also appeared including Gympie (1867) and Charters Towers (1871) following the discovery of gold, of which exports outstripped wool by 1875. While domestic livestock and associated commodities still accounted for nearly 60% of Queensland’s trade in 1880, this was down from over 95% in 1865 as minerals, marine products and sugar slowly helped to diversify and improve the economy.⁵¹ Growing prosperity within Brisbane racing was also evident by the end of the decade with prizemoney ranging from the £100 Morton Handicap to the £500 Brisbane Cup. In 1878, the QTC offered larger money pools than the NAJC, and could boast an attendance of 4,000 at its Brisbane Cup meeting. Amid an expanding racing calendar, the QTC was holding the premier meetings of the colony while racing in Ipswich was in decline (the NAJC held its final meeting in 1881).⁵² When Brisbane connected as a railhead in 1876, Ipswich also lost its advantage as the railway terminus for the region.⁵³ Eagle Farm itself was granted a rail extension in 1882, and enjoyed the support of successive governors Sir Arthur Kennedy and Sir Anthony Musgrave between 1877 and 1888, whose

⁴⁸ Bell, *Queensland Club*, 4.

⁴⁹ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 83.

⁵⁰ Robert Longhurst, *History of the Queensland Turf Club* (unpublished), 50.

⁵¹ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 91.

⁵² Harold Freedman & Andrew Lemon, *The History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing vol. 2* (Melbourne: Southbank Communications Group, 1990), 338-340.

⁵³ O’Hara, “Horseracing and Betting in Queensland,” 29.

patronage of thoroughbred racing further lifted the sport and renewed interest among Brisbane's inhabitants.⁵⁴

Brisbane developed further in the 1880s and became the largest commercial and industrial centre in Queensland.⁵⁵ The thoroughbred industry also experienced substantial growth during this period. It already had a longer history than any other sport in Queensland and appealed to all classes of society. Whereas the elite were members of the clubs, the lower socio-economic groups made up most of the attendees at race meetings. As general admission to QTC meetings at Eagle Farm was 1s., the races were a relatively inexpensive outing for the family.⁵⁶ Entry to the St Leger enclosure cost 2s., the Saddling Paddock and Grandstand 5s., while the Members' Stand was reserved for QTC members for whom entry was free (the Flat – an enclosure in the centre of the course for the smaller punter – opened later in 1905).⁵⁷ The introduction of the totalisator also encouraged higher attendances. It first appeared at the QTC's Brisbane Cup meeting in May 1879, with Eagle Farm operating its own machine the following year (the state-of-the-art mechanical Julius tote equipment was later installed on the Flat in 1917).⁵⁸ The totalisator offered fixed odds for each starter, with calculated winning dividends based on the betting investment pool made up of tickets sold.⁵⁹ A proportion of the pool was devoted to running expenses, taxes and profits – the QTC even imposed a 7.5% commission on profits to help it escape debt in the 1880s.⁶⁰

As leisure time was initially scarce with many working Saturdays, the QTC held its race meetings at Eagle Farm to coincide with the main public holidays of Christmas and New Year, the Exhibition, and both the Queen's and the Prince of Wales' birthdays. In 1889, for instance, some 12,000 racegoers attended the Queen's Birthday meeting.⁶¹ While Eagle Farm was the premier racecourse within Brisbane and the wider colony, the likes of Albion Park (then known as 'the Creek'), Deagon (near Sandgate) and occasionally Kedron and Coorparoo all held meetings in the city following a boom in racing towards the end of the

⁵⁴ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 35.

⁵⁵ Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 8.

⁵⁶ Howell & Howell, *Sport in Queensland*, 107.

⁵⁷ Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 199-200; Coughlan, *QTC*, 17.

⁵⁸ Coughlan, *QTC*, 12-17.

⁵⁹ Kay Cohen, "The TAB in Queensland: some aspects of its operation," in *Gamblers' Paradise*, ed. John Kerr (Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 1996), 47-8.

⁶⁰ O'Hara, "Horseracing and Betting in Queensland," 31.

⁶¹ Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 199-200.

1880s.⁶² The Brisbane Jockey Club, for example, held regular meetings at the Creek, which was widely regarded as the working-class racecourse. The more elite QTC had by now become Queensland's leading race club but, in addition to providing quality racing at Eagle Farm, it sought to ensure the proper regulation and control of the sport throughout the region. Consequently, in 1885 it issued a new set of racing rules and insisted that all racing clubs in the colony were to race under a single code.⁶³ The QTC was, however, unable to attain the same degree of control over racing in Queensland as its counterparts achieved in other regions. In NSW, for instance, the undisputed principal racing club was the Australian Jockey Club, while the Victoria Racing Club was similarly dominant in Victoria.⁶⁴

While some clubs registered with the QTC, others rejected both its rules and its requirement for registration. This controversy led to the formation of the North Queensland Racing Association (NQRA) and the Central Queensland Racing Association (CQRA) as the principal clubs in their respective areas. W. J. Carter concludes that this was due to a developing 'anti-metropolitan bias' in the new colony, as opposed to any particular antipathy towards the QTC itself.⁶⁵ This carried some truth, as when Queensland voted for federalism by Australia's narrowest margin in 1899, the north, west and central regions partially voted against the long-detested dominance of Brisbane.⁶⁶ While the Australian Rules for Racing were later adopted in 1912 – and ensured a sense of uniformity throughout the industry – control of racing in Queensland remained decentralised among the three principal clubs. It was within this industry of undoubted popularity throughout the region, but in which tension appeared endemic, that Brisbane Tattersall's Club first emerged.

The formation of Brisbane Tattersall's Club

A need for the Tattersall's concept and the sense of trust and reliability that it promoted was obvious in the emerging thoroughbred industry. Following the establishment of the QTC in 1863, and the growing interest throughout the colony in turf matters, the *Brisbane Courier* complained that the absence of a Tattersall's was unsatisfactory. Such sporting headquarters were needed 'where accurate information (could) be obtained of the chances

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Coughlan, *Queensland Turf Club*, 14.

⁶⁴ O'Hara, "Horseracing and Betting in Queensland," 29.

⁶⁵ Hon. W. J Carter, "QTC and Racing Governance," in Coughlan, *QTC*, 276.

⁶⁶ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 141.

of various competitors for public favour and money,' assisted by the latest English and colonial sports coverage alongside a library containing books of reference. More pressingly, it could provide members with 'an impartial and competent tribunal for the settlement of wagers' and help prevent the 'blacklegging which (was) so distasteful to all genuine sporting men.'⁶⁷ In other words, a regulated environment for wagering, following the Tattersall's subscription room model, was required. Within two days of the article, a meeting took place at Amos Braysher's Metropolitan Hotel – Brisbane's leading sporting establishment – for those interested in beginning a Tattersall's club 'on a similar principle to that in existence in Sydney.'⁶⁸ A club duly formed within a few weeks on 8 July 1865, with Kent – the horse auctioneer – becoming chairman and Braysher assuming the role of honorary secretary.⁶⁹ One bet of £100 against two horses winning the Mayor's Cup (Sydney) and the Melbourne Cup demonstrated some of the high-end speculation already taking place.⁷⁰

Tattersall's hosted the declaration of entrances before the inaugural QTC race meeting in August 1865, as well as the distribution of prizes afterwards.⁷¹ The Club also sponsored its first race at the meeting. The Tattersall's Cup, won by W. Devine's *Young Mormon*, ran over a mile-and-a-half on 16 August 1865, and represented the 'best race of the day and perhaps of the meeting.'⁷² It carried a value of £25, while the cup itself was a 'beautifully mounted emu egg' donated by Mr Kosvitz, worth roughly £30.⁷³ In May 1866, a dinner at the Metropolitan marked the first annual gathering of the new club. By this stage, John Little was chairman. Both Kent and Little had previously served as honorary secretaries at the QTC, and a strong relationship between the two entities was already apparent.⁷⁴

Despite such developments, Tattersall's could hardly be viewed as a fully-functioning club. This was partly due to a fledgling turf scene within a city that was still in its early stages of development. Indeed, it was only when bookmakers arrived via steamer from Melbourne or Sydney that meetings at Tattersall's became lively, where 'almost every conceivable

⁶⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 14 June 1865, 2.

⁶⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 17 June 1865, 6.

⁶⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 10 July 1865, 3.

⁷⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 27 July 1865, 2.

⁷¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 3 August 1865, 5; *Brisbane Courier* 24 August 186, 2.

⁷² *Brisbane Courier*, 17 August 1865, 7.

⁷³ *Queensland Times* (Ipswich), 1 August 1865, 4.

⁷⁴ *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 4 May 1866, 12.

combination was offered to investors upon horse races.⁷⁵ On occasion, Calcutta sweeps – essentially a combination between a raffle and auction – also sparked interest. However, it appeared that the Club was not living up to the Tattersall’s concept, and was particularly lacking a clear set of rules. Although those of Sydney Tattersall’s had been adopted, that was also a formative and largely ostensive institution.⁷⁶ A letter written to the *Brisbane Courier* in March 1867 stressed that ‘Tatts should have a code of laws of their own for the guidance of members and the public,’ before adding that ‘nowhere in the world are such rules more necessary than here.’⁷⁷ Possibly in response to this shortcoming, the New Tattersall’s Club formed in May 1868 at the Royal Hotel, while members of the existing Club conceded that theirs had been ‘very indifferently supported.’⁷⁸ It was suggested that this was partly because of Braysher’s role as both secretary and owner of the house where meetings were held.⁷⁹ In any case, there was certainly not enough support for two separate clubs, and the New Tattersall’s disappeared by the end of the year.

This at least seemed to spur the original Club into action, and Tattersall’s decided to organise its first race meeting for New Years’ Day in 1869. With a new honorary secretary (J. Fowles) in position, a four-race meeting under QTC rules took place at Eagle Farm.⁸⁰ Although calls for the formation of a Tattersall’s had been more concerned with off-course provisions regarding betting and settling than on-course activity, the Club’s interest in holding its own race days was understandable. The likes of Braysher, Kent and Little – along with Club committeemen such as John McLennan – were all horse owners who liked to race, and had all regularly acted as race stewards. If successful, race days could turn a healthy profit and promote the Club’s name, while on a broader scale they also supported the development of the thoroughbred racing industry in Queensland. The New Years’ race meeting was successful, with an attendance of nearly 1,500 that included Queensland Governor Samuel Wensley Blackall. This was a respectable turnout in a town of no more

⁷⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 5 August 1868, 2.

⁷⁶ *Bell’s Life in Sydney*, 9 March 1861, 2.

⁷⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 13 March 1867, 3.

⁷⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 11 May 1868, 2.

⁷⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 19 May 1868, 2.

⁸⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 27 October 1868, 1; *Brisbane Courier*, 31 December 1868, 1.

than 15,000 inhabitants. The programme included the second running of the Tattersall's Cup, the day's most valuable race at £50, which was won by L. Flannery's *Centipede*.⁸¹

While the Tattersall's rooms were used for the settling of the QTC's Autumn meeting in 1870, there is little evidence of a vibrant club existing for the rest of the decade.⁸² Operating out of new rooms at the Tattersall's Hotel in Adelaide Street, an apparently 'well-organised' Tattersall's Club briefly appeared in March 1872, and disparagingly referred to the previous incarnation as one that had existed 'in name-only.'⁸³ However, this also appeared short-lived before a new club emerged back at the Metropolitan Hotel in 1875, where it was decided to ask the QTC for the use of its racecourse on the day after its own meeting.⁸⁴ A three-race event duly took place on 26 May 1875 at Eagle Farm and, although rain-affected, it was still attended by a respectable and 'courageous' 500 who were 'well rewarded by the excellence of the racing.'⁸⁵ Betting and settling took place before and after at the Tattersall's rooms where the race day winnings were also distributed. Those present also agreed to offer the QTC a surplus bonus for permitting the use of its racecourse.⁸⁶

Once more, however, Tattersall's disappeared, and again this appeared to partly betray the developing state of racing within a district that was yet to fully 'boom.' After all, Brisbane's population of under 30,000 for most of the 1870s paled in comparison with the 200,000 living in both Sydney and Melbourne. The mid-1870s was a tough time for the Brisbane turf generally – especially following depression – and its race meetings fell behind provincial events such as those in Ipswich, while the QTC struggled financially.⁸⁷ The Club's tenuous existence was also indicative of a lack of identity. Although Tattersall's held race meetings under its own name, it was not a racing club in the same sense as the QTC and it relied upon that institution's racecourse on such occasions. Given the six-year break between its first and second race meetings, it seemed the Club was either reluctant to stage frequent race days or was simply unable to. While its rooms at the Metropolitan provided the latest sporting information, and served as a place for sporting men to receive odds, place bets and

⁸¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 2 January 1868, 3; *Queensland Times*, 2 January 1869, 3.

⁸² *Brisbane Courier*, 28 May 1870, 5.

⁸³ *Brisbane Courier*, 5 March 1872, 3.

⁸⁴ *The Telegraph* (Brisbane), 21 May 1875, 2.

⁸⁵ *Queenslander*, 29 May 1875, 3.

⁸⁶ *Telegraph*, 31 May 1875, 3.

⁸⁷ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 83; Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 26.

settle on races, it is debatable whether this reflected a functioning Tattersall's Club as betting appeared to take place regardless. Simply calling a room by a well-known but widely-used name was not conducive towards an organised club with a clear purpose, and the regulation and protection that wagering desperately required remained absent.

By the end of the 1870s, with the growing prosperity and profile of the local turf, the *Brisbane Courier* repeated its call for a clearly defined Tattersall's in Brisbane. Its existence would protect both backers and 'bona fide' bookmakers, and place betting on 'a respectable basis.'⁸⁸ A court of appeal to settle disputes and a strong set of rules were again suggested. Following another brief revival and disappearance in 1880, leading Queen Street bookmaker and tobacconist William Mooney pleaded for a fixed establishment in 1882:

In the southern colonies, we have Tattersall's clubs which afford us some protection, and if a man prove defaulter, be he backer or bookmaker, his name is made public so that others may be on their guard and fight shy of doing business with such one. Here we have no such privilege, and defaulters are able to go about and make wagers with impunity with men of such integrity.⁸⁹

The continued presence and lack of protection against defaulters was a problem that had endured on the Brisbane turf, despite being one of the principal reasons behind the original appeals for a Tattersall's in 1865. In addition, the subscription rooms at the Metropolitan were no longer functioning, while the QTC refused to carry such a room – turf and betting etiquette was apparently a non-issue among its members – so local punters as well as bookmakers were affected by the lack of an established Tattersall's.⁹⁰ Consequently, Brisbane's leading sporting men joined forces to also demand a formation 'on a firm basis,' and dismissed recent failures as a consequence of 'the inertness of those concerned.'⁹¹

An 'influential meeting' finally took place on 5 November 1883 at the Australian Hotel. It was chaired by J. Callaghan, and among several of the well-known men of the Queensland turf in attendance was Justice Ratcliffe Pring – who had become the first Attorney-General in Queensland in 1859. Pring reportedly made an excellent speech that strongly advocated the formation of a Tattersall's club on the model of those in the southern colonies. In addition to regulating wagering, he also noted that, by providing reliable information and news, such

⁸⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 17 May 1879, 3.

⁸⁹ *Queenslander*, 18 February 1882, 205.

⁹⁰ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 30-39.

⁹¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 October 1883, 3.

a club 'would protect those who wished to deal with sporting matters in a fair and honourable manner.'⁹² Two evenings later, Brisbane Tattersall's Club was officially established on Wednesday, 7 November 1883. Pring was elected president, while McLennan was appointed vice president. Both men had a long association with the Brisbane turf and previous incarnations of the Club – Pring had even consented to become president of the New Tattersall's in 1868 – but on this occasion they demonstrated a clear commitment to the new institution in actually assuming such vital roles.⁹³ A committee of seven was also appointed – consisting of W. Flynn, J. Callaghan, J. Mullen, J. P. Jost, J. Williams, G. E. Cooper and G. Haygarth – while the rules of the Victoria Racing Club were adopted.⁹⁴ Fifty-nine members signed up that evening – consisting of publicans, tobacconists, businessmen, prominent horse owners and bookmakers – and twenty-three immediately paid the one guinea entrance fee.⁹⁵ Despite an understandable sense of scepticism, the Club not only survived its first twelve months but continues to exist today. This thesis will explain how.

⁹² *Brisbane Courier*, 6 November 1883, 4.

⁹³ *Brisbane Courier*, 19 May 1868, 2.

⁹⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 6 November 1883, 4.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Part One

The First 100 Years (1883 – 1983)

1) Relationship with the Queensland Thoroughbred Industry

It is clear that Tattersall's Club was born out of the emerging thoroughbred industry in Queensland. This chapter outlines how the Club's relationship with the industry developed over its first 100 years of existence. The Club continued to hold its own race days, and at one stage even possessed its own racecourse as it appeared destined to become a racing club. Tattersall's did not neglect the needs of the industry that had repeatedly called for its establishment, however, as it helped to ensure the legitimacy of bookmakers and wagering, while it also acted as an arbiter for betting disputes. The chapter examines how racing dominated the Club's early identity and endured as an important characteristic, but with diminishing centrality. Settling Day, for example, became an iconic weekly tradition at the Club for most of the twentieth century, yet a separate Tattersall's racing entity formed in the 1950s while the main Club gradually became less defined by its bookmakers.

i) A racing club and a racecourse

From the Club's inception, a strong relationship between itself and the QTC was apparent, and this was an important factor in its early success and survival. Ratcliffe Pring served as president for both institutions between 1883 and 1884, as did Boyd Morehead in the early 1890s (Morehead was also Queensland Premier between 1888 and 1890).¹ Pring's successor at Tattersall's, John McLennan, was also a long-term committeeman at the QTC, while Buzi Bentley – the Club's first secretary – was replaced upon his resignation in February 1885 by Graham Haygarth, who also served as handicapper to the premier club.² Tattersall's was registered as a racing club with the QTC, adopted its rules of racing, and used Eagle Farm as a venue for its race days. In turn, the QTC often used the Tattersall's rooms as a venue for its meetings and for settling, as it had done with earlier incarnations of the Club. When the QTC's Annual Meeting took place at Tattersall's in July 1890, the *Referee* reported that it was 'an outward and visible sign of the harmony and friendly feeling that has existed between the two metropolitan clubs since Tattersall's was started.'³

¹ *Cavalcade of Queensland Sport*, 29.

² *Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney), 24 September 1887, 37.

³ *The Referee* (Sydney), 16 July 1890, 7.

Despite leasing the QTC's racecourse, Tattersall's controlled its own race meetings: it set the programme, accepted the nominations, arranged for the handicapper and provided the prizemoney. The new Club's first race meeting was held on 10 December 1884 – Separation Day – and drew an estimated crowd of 3,000. The meeting was one of several attractions during the public holiday, with trips to the Sandgate beaches, country travel by rail, and the annual Brisbane Regatta all popular among the city's inhabitants.⁴ Although esteemed *Telegraph* turf writer Nat Gould complained of long intervals between the six races – and a substandard lunch – the *Sydney Morning Herald* welcomed 'an excellent start for the new club.'⁵ Tattersall's also received praise for its 'sufficient sense and pluck' in supporting the Queensland turf by initiating a common nomination system of one sovereign for each race, whatever its value, which ensured that there were as many entries as possible.⁶

In 1885, Tattersall's expanded its annual race meeting to a two-day carnival on 10 and 12 December, where 'the conduct of the racing was in every way satisfactory,' and attracted over 8,000 patrons including 5,000 on the Tattersall's Cup Day alone.⁷ Vice-regal patronage soon appeared, with Queensland Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave attending the 1887 race meeting.⁸ The Club also capitalised upon the increased prosperity and popularity of racing in the colony. The 1888 Tattersall's Cup race, for instance, was worth £600 compared to £150 five years earlier.⁹ Although Tattersall's could not match the stakes of the south, added prizemoney at its race meetings was deemed 'more than respectable,' and the Club was 'fully entitled to rank as one of the premier clubs of the colonies.'¹⁰ Tattersall's also made a significant effort in regards to its trophies and prizes. For example, the 1885 Tattersall's Cup reportedly excelled even the Melbourne Cup and was 'far too handsome and costly to stand idle on the stereotyped colonial chiffonier.'¹¹ The 1886 Cup was similarly grandiose.

⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 11 December 1884, 5.

⁵ *Telegraph*, 11 December 1884, 4; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 December 1884, 8.

⁶ *Queenslander*, 8 November 1884, 749.

⁷ *Queensland Figaro and Punch* (Brisbane), 19 December 1885, 14.

⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 12 December 1887, 6.

⁹ *The Week* (Brisbane), 13 October 1888, 25.

¹⁰ *Queenslander*, 17 December 1887, 985.

¹¹ *Queensland Figaro* (Brisbane), 21 November 1885, 4; *Queensland Figaro*, 28 November 1885, 26.



Fig. 1. (left) One of the oldest Tattersall's racing tickets in existence. These were provided to members of Tattersall's to enable their access to the Club's race meetings each season. This ticket – for the 1887-1888 season – also displays an early version of the Club's 'TC' emblem. The 'T' perhaps doubles as horse grooming scissors, while the 'C' is clearly a horseshoe. (Photo: Dr Michael O'Shea, 2014).

*Fig. 2. (right) The 1886 Tattersall's Cup, photographed at the Club in 2014. Its inscription reads: 'Tattersall's Cup Brisbane presented by Mr C. J. McCaffery, Two Miles Won by *Pirate*, Time 3.39½, 10.12.86. The property of James McGill, *Pirate* ridden by Fred Brightwell.'*

One newspaper reported: 'It is from the atelier of Mr T. M. Alcock, the well-known jeweller of Sydney. On one side is the inscription, and on the other a mounted thoroughbred in full gallop. Raised on a circular fluted silver base and foot, the cup is of Etruscan design and is a combination of silver and gold; the body and neck being of pure gold and the base of silver. It stands on an ebony pedestal, and is surmounted by a horse and jockey in silver.' (*The Week*, 4 December 1886, 21).

The Cup – an important part of the Club's racing history – returned to Tattersall's after an absence of 114 years when it was purchased, at the behest of CEO Paul Jones, at a Christie's auction in Melbourne in 2000. It is currently on display at Tattersall's, alongside the 1888 Cup, and several other trophies from the twentieth-century. The 1885 Cup has also recently been located.

(Photo: Dr Michael O'Shea, 2014).



At the beginning of the 1890s, Tattersall's appeared in a strong position. It had over 700 paid members on its roll – up from fifty-nine in late 1883 – with a new entrance fee fixed at two guineas (£2.2s.) to go with an annual subscription of one guinea (£1.1s.).¹² Over £18,000 had been distributed in prizemoney at its race meetings – which from 1887 included a two-day meeting in April in addition to the annual Spring meeting in December – and these were nearly all successful.¹³ While not wishing to oversimplify the process, the importance of prizemoney was relatively straightforward. Naturally, higher stakes attracted better horses (and often encouraged more numbers to compete), which in turn supported both breeding and training off the course and greater attendances and wagering at the races. Tattersall's also benefited: its races were reportedly just as popular as those of the QTC, while they also enriched 'the coffers' considerably.¹⁴ The Club could point to a surplus of almost £3,000 on its annual statement in 1889 as evidence of a strong financial position, largely achieved through membership fees and the success of its racing activities.¹⁵

This progress was severely curtailed, however, by one of Australia's worst ever depressions between 1891 and 1896. Queensland National Bank ceased trading in May 1893, and by the end of the year all the region's financial institutions had failed. To add further misery, Brisbane also suffered from destructive floods in 1893.¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, racing clubs struggled. The QTC's plans to extend the Eagle Farm track from eight to ten furlongs in 1891 were delayed and did not materialise for another ten years. Stakes were also reduced substantially. While the QTC's Queen's Birthday meeting was worth nearly £3,500 in 1890, it had fallen to £1,600 by 1894.¹⁷ Tattersall's race meeting in December 1892 also decreased its stakes, with many of the prizes 'mere shadows of those given in more prosperous years.'¹⁸ The Tattersall's Cup, for example, had been worth £600 in 1888 but was now reduced to £200.¹⁹ Even with a policy of retrenchment, the Club still reported a loss of nearly £370 in 1892 and pondered 'the advisability of holding future race meetings.'²⁰

¹² *Brisbane Courier*, 13 November 1889, 6.

¹³ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 11 April 1891, 1.

¹⁴ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 24 September 1887, 37.

¹⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 13 November 1889, 6.

¹⁶ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 124.

¹⁷ Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 201.

¹⁸ *The Week*, 16 December 1892, 20.

¹⁹ *Queenslander*, 10 December 1892, 1116.

²⁰ Tattersall's Club Annual Report (TCAR) 1892.

Tattersall's race days were subsequently abandoned until Spring 1895. A meeting was called to consider the Club's financial situation in May 1893, when it was revealed that there was little over £12 in the bank – compared with £2,500 in 1889 – while there was also £250 outstanding in subscription payments.²¹ Without Secretary James Byrne's generous offer to continue his role in an honorary capacity – Byrne ultimately kept the Club running at financial loss to himself – Tattersall's would probably have disappeared yet again.²²

It was during these difficult years that tension first arose between Tattersall's and the QTC. In reflecting upon the 'extraordinary depression' of 1891, President Andrew Thynne noted that the Club's racing had not been as successful as previous years and apportioned blame towards 'the actions of the QTC in arbitrarily appropriating to themselves the date of our most profitable meeting.'²³ This was in reference to the December race meeting, which had been moved to the beginning of November. As this closely followed the Spring reunions of the Victoria clubs – including, of course, the Melbourne Cup – many of Queensland's leading racing men and horses were absent. Although the 1891 meeting was not a complete failure, it was a much smaller affair than usual.²⁴ The QTC did reduce its leasing charge over the next few years – it was £25 per day in 1896 compared to £200 in 1891 – and this appeared to appease relations.²⁵ Despite an economic revival embodied by four profitable Tattersall's race meetings in 1897, however, the Club remained disillusioned in its inability to obtain Eagle Farm on suitable dates. The Committee reported in January 1898 that it blamed the QTC for the Club's failure to hold a race meeting that month. T. Lehane, a member of both institutions, spoke for many when he referred to the actions of the QTC as 'very dog-in-the-manager like,' especially as it did not use the course on either day Tattersall's applied for.²⁶ More seriously, at the 1902 Annual Meeting, Committeeman P. Murphy spoke of the difficulties during the preceding decade when 'the QTC raised the rent from £25 to £100 per afternoon...and what for? Simply to crush Tattersall's.' The applause that greeted Murphy's comments suggested that this was a sentiment shared among members.²⁷

²¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 3 May 1893, 7; *Brisbane Courier*, 13 November 1889, 16.

²² TCAR 1894.

²³ TCAR 1891.

²⁴ *Queenslander*, 14 November 1891, 348.

²⁵ TCAR 1891; Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 86.

²⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, 29 January 1898, 5.

²⁷ *Telegraph*, 1 February 1902, 3.

Tattersall's appeared determined to capitalise upon a growing racing industry on its own terms. By 1900, there were around 120 race meetings in Brisbane each year to meet the wide public interest amid a population that had risen to over 120,000, and this was further catered for by the extensive newspaper coverage that horseracing received.²⁸ In addition, the 1896 and 1900 *Factories and Shops Acts* limited working hours and provided a half-holiday on Saturdays, which afforded 'persons hitherto unable to protect themselves some time for leisure and recreation.'²⁹ Racing also benefited from an economy that had largely recovered. While prizemoney was not quite up to the standard of the late 1880s, it was still an improvement upon the early to mid-1890s. Some 300 horses were also being trained in Brisbane in 1900, compared with fewer than 100 in 1893.³⁰ Although the QTC had generally been accommodating towards Tattersall's, a strained relationship perhaps reflected unease at the Club's aims and progress as well as the recent financial difficulties. Tattersall's was clearly committed to holding regular race meetings and was becoming more of a racing club than a betting club – a tension that had plagued its early incarnations – and in that sense it was establishing itself as something of a rival to the QTC.

After the leasing cost at Eagle Farm was doubled in 1897, Tattersall's was also denied use of the racecourse in January 1898. Vice President C. A. Morris decided to 'try and make better terms with the QTC or else pursue a racecourse of our own.'³¹ However, in October 1898 the QTC again declined to grant the Club use of its track for a date the following month, and Tattersall's instead rented the Deagon racecourse. The successful meeting that followed was encouraging and, in July 1899, Tattersall's entered negotiations with Queensland National Bank to purchase the Deagon site for £3,185. The Committee believed that 'the future welfare and progress of the Club rendered it necessary that a ground over which the Club had full control was essential.'³² Three more profitable race meetings took place before the end of the year and suggested a bright future for Tattersall's and its new racecourse.

²⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 23 March 1900, 4. This population figure was recorded within a ten-mile radius of the Brisbane General Post Office.

²⁹ *Queensland Official Yearbook* (1901), 125 cited in Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 193.

³⁰ Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 199-201.

³¹ Tattersall's Club Minutes (TCM) 1898.

³² TCAR 1900.

Treasurer J. Gralton believed that once it was railed and equipped with a good grandstand, the Club 'would possess a resort that would be as popular as any in Queensland.'³³

Ten race meetings were held during a successful 1900, and a further twelve took place in 1901.³⁴ Although the Club applied for QTC date protection, it had otherwise complete autonomy in its race meetings. The racecourse, however, was not without its problems. In September 1900, *Truth* appraised the grandstand which stood 'just one-foot high and gives the patrons a good opportunity of viewing the race,' before adding – perhaps unnecessarily – 'this is sarcasm.'³⁵ More seriously, in September 1901 an inspector noted that the stand, which already lacked cover from the beating sun, was in 'rotten condition' – its supporting structures had apparently been eaten away by white ants.³⁶ Owing to its instability, an additional twenty-five acres of land beside the course was purchased to erect an improved stand, though this expense delayed any hopes of building. There was also considerable distance between Deagon station and the racetrack for spectators and horse-owners to navigate. Tattersall's had hoped for a rail-line to be built to the course in early 1900, but repeated discussions with the transport minister had proven unsuccessful.³⁷ Such reluctance may have stemmed from previous over-expenditure on rail construction – \$7 million had been borrowed for over 300 kilometres of rail-line in Queensland between 1879 and 1883 – which contributed to the colony having the highest deficit in the British Empire in 1892.³⁸

In addition, the racecourse struggled with heavy rainfall, and many of the Club's dates at Deagon were rain-affected. During one such deluge, racegoers 'removed their boots and socks and tucked up their trousers to obtain greater comfort in moving about on the water-covered saddling enclosure.'³⁹ While in wet weather the track was covered in mud, on dry days it was covered in dust, and by 1903 it required draining, raising and turfing.⁴⁰ The Committee could either bring the site up to date as a metropolitan racing venue – at an estimated cost of £3,500, and having already spent £1,000 on attempted improvements – or

³³ TCM 1900.

³⁴ TCAR 1901 and 1902.

³⁵ *Truth*, 16 September 1900, 3.

³⁶ TCM 1901.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 113.

³⁹ Collins & Thompson, *Harking Back*, 45

⁴⁰ TCM 1903.

negotiate a release back to the vendors.⁴¹ In September 1903, after all seven race meetings that year had resulted in financial failure with a combined loss of over £500, the Committee decided that it was in the Club's best interests to abandon Deagon.⁴² Four meetings were subsequently held at Albion Park, which was leased from the Brisbane Jockey Club at £40 per meeting, and recorded an overall profit of over £200.⁴³ Not only was this a welcome salvation, but it also underlined the value of a fully-functioning and accessible racecourse.

Despite three of the four years at Deagon proving successful, the experiment ultimately ended in failure. While there was a degree of misfortune, Tattersall's was also at fault. A sub-committee had been appointed by President Thynne to investigate the potential of the site nearly two years prior to purchase, and should have noted its poor drainage. Problems with the grandstand were unfortunate, but similarly not unforeseeable. The necessity of the acquisition was also debatable. Even during the negotiations for the Deagon site in 1899, the Club had been able to finalise two profitable meetings at Eagle Farm, which suggested that relations with the QTC were far from irrecoverable. Although the leasing arrangement could be fractious, it had already endured for nearly two decades. On the other hand, the move demonstrated the determination of a Club that foresaw the continued growth of the racing industry and wanted to capitalise without any sense of subservience. The purchase was also seen as just reward for a Committee that, having guided the Club through the troublesome 1890s, took an ambitious 'jump in the dark' in securing its own racecourse.⁴⁴

The saga was not helped by the instability at the Club between 1899 and 1903, when three presidents, four secretaries and four treasurers were separately appointed.⁴⁵ It was telling that the final decision to relieve the Club of its racecourse – which, incidentally, was not unanimously supported by members – was made by a committee that did not consist of a single person associated with the purchase.⁴⁶ It is worth considering what might have been had the venture proven more successful and the Club held on to the site. Tattersall's might

⁴¹ *Telegraph*, 19 January 1904, 2.

⁴² TCAR 1903.

⁴³ *Truth*, 17 January 1904, 7.

⁴⁴ *Telegraph*, 1 February 1902, 3.

⁴⁵ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 241-2.

⁴⁶ *Queenslander*, 14 February 1900, 253; *Telegraph*, 19 January 1904, 4.

have become a fully-fledged racing club with its headquarters based at Deagon, while its identity would have probably remained embedded in thoroughbred racing above all else.

ii) Bookmaking and arbitration

Although Tattersall's appeared to develop as more of a racing club in the years following its inception, it had formed in response to the repeatedly expressed need for a body to protect backers and bookmakers in gambling, and to arbitrate upon betting disputes. Despite the sport's elite connections and leadership, nineteenth century race days – though colourful – still possessed something of a wily nature. There was initially little control exercised by clubs over the methods of gambling, games of chance, private wagers and other illegal activities that thrived at race meetings.⁴⁷ Due to the use of telegram links between racecourses, for example, bogus messages could state that a race was delayed even though some might already know the result, and bookmakers would subsequently fall prey to their late bets.⁴⁸

While it was beyond Tattersall's to tackle all these issues, Pring had expressed hope in 1883 that the Club's formation would 'put a certain restraint on gambling swindlers who at present haunted the saddling paddocks.'⁴⁹ These included untrustworthy bookmakers as well as defaulters since, in theory, anyone could set themselves up as a bookmaker on the course. There was no licencing system, and this was often to the detriment of a defrauded public.⁵⁰ Consequently, one clear way for the Club to assist was to provide legitimacy to its bookmakers and protection for its members, and the Committee was almost immediately 'seized of the necessity for safeguarding its members against the intrigue and default on one side or the other.'⁵¹ Bookmakers were obliged to satisfy the Committee as to their financial status, while the QTC stated that no bookmaker would be recognised at Eagle Farm unless he paid a licence fee of £5.5s. per annum.⁵² In 1884, the QTC Secretary Percy Ricardo – a founding member of Tattersall's – also advised that 'no bookmaker would be permitted to ply his avocation in the future unless he obtained the sanction of Tattersall's Club.'⁵³ New rules adopted at a Tattersall's Special Meeting in 1892 ensured that only registered

⁴⁷ Howell & Howell, *Sport in Queensland*, 109.

⁴⁸ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 5.

⁴⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 6 November 1883, 4.

⁵⁰ Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 201.

⁵¹ *Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Souvenir and Retrospect* (Brisbane: Roberts & Russell, 1926), 29.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *The Week*, 15 November 1884, 18.

bookmakers could receive bets within the Club. They also had to collectively index their betting books, which were stamped, numbered and signed by the secretary to verify their use in evidence.⁵⁴ Rule 38, meanwhile, declared that defaulters were 'to be posted on a blackboard exhibited in the Club Rooms,' and that such a person could only be readmitted 'by fresh election having discharged his liabilities in full.'⁵⁵

These rules ensured a form of regulation for bookmakers and enforced a degree of betting protocol, while defaulters were also discouraged. The immediate impact of Tattersall's was well received by the *Brisbane Courier* which, in May 1885, claimed that 'the hallmark of Tattersall's Club will soon be, if it is not so already, the only passport to enable him to open a book at any meeting in the colony.' This also assisted the respectable bookmaker who would 'not have to compete with rivals who receive when they win but who never pay out when they lose.'⁵⁶ For many, the totalisator had already removed the need to bet with bookmakers, with £6,000 passing through the machine at the Club's Spring race meetings in both 1885 and 1888.⁵⁷ By the 1890s, there was also the popularity of sweeps to contend with, most notably the national institution of George Adams' Tattersall's consultations.⁵⁸ The bookmaker was therefore given credibility by his association with Tattersall's Club at a time when the occupation faced increased competition from other methods of gambling.

Tattersall's was also regularly arbitrating upon betting disputes soon after its establishment. The *Brisbane Courier* was full of praise for the new 'tribunal under the time-honoured name of Tattersall' that the Club provided. In referring to 'the calls made on it from all parts of the colony to settle racing disputes,' it was even suggested that it may soon claim to be the 'Tattersall's of Queensland.'⁵⁹ Given the existence of a separate Tattersall's Club in North Queensland during the 1890s, such expansion was unnecessary.⁶⁰ In reality, the Club's arbitration was predominantly focused upon its own members, though referrals from other race clubs were also frequent. Without a Tattersall's, betting disputes had been referred to the stewards of racing clubs, who often declined to interfere due to their inability to make

⁵⁴ TCM 1892; *Tattersall's Club Retrospect*, 29.

⁵⁵ TCM 1892.

⁵⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, 22 May 1885, 3.

⁵⁷ *Queenslander*, 19 December 1885, 983; *Brisbane Courier*, 10 December 1888, 3.

⁵⁸ Howell & Howell, *Sport in Queensland*, 110.

⁵⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 22 May 1885, 3.

⁶⁰ *Northern Mining Register* (Charters Towers, QLD), 16 May 1891, 9.

binding decisions or hold out on threats of expulsion.⁶¹ A typical line of correspondence concerning arbitration at Tattersall's occurred in July 1893, when a letter was received from a Mr Taylor who, having been informed by Secretary Byrne of bookmaker W. H. Brown's complaint of non-payment, asserted a counter-claim that he was the one owed money:

Via Gooroomba, 30th June 1893

Secretary & Committee
Tatto Club, Brisbane.

Dear Sir,

Re Brown's claim against me.

I deny that I am indebted to him in the sum of £2 and claim that he owes me £5.

The facts of the disputed wager is as follows which I am prepared to take oath as true.

In the hurdle race run at the last. G. I. C. meeting Brown was offering when the horses were about 6 furlongs from home the following prices Even money on the field 6 to 4 Kingsley 5 to 1 Laurette I immediately said "yes" 25 to 5 Laurette and proceeded to write it down Laurette then made a bit of a run & Brown exclaimed NO wages. I refused to cancel it and Brown now refuse to pay.

I told him his partner Dickson that I would lay the matter before Tattersall's. Dickson said Oh don't do that we don't want to be making a fuss about it & going before the Committee.

I therefore claim that W. H. Brown is indebted to me in the sum of £5.

Yours truly
Fred Taylor

I may also state that the only person I have had any communication with this matter is 97, I. Bradburn, not Brown.

Fig. 3. Letter to the Club from Mr Taylor, July 1893 (from TCM 1893).

'I deny that I am indebted to him in the sum of twenty pounds and claim that he owes me five pounds...In the hurdle race run at the last QTC meeting, Brown was offering when the horses were about six furlongs from home the following prices: even money on the field, 6 to 4 Kingsley, 5 to 1 Laurette. I immediately said "yes" 25 to 5 Laurette and proceeded to write it down. Laurette then made a bit of a run and Brown exclaimed "no wages." I refused to cancel it and Brown now refuses to pay. I told him and his partner Dickson that I would lay the matter before Tattersall's. Dickson said, "Oh don't do that, we don't want to be making a fuss about it and going before the Committee." I therefore claim that W. H. Brown is indebted to me in the sum of £5.'

(Photo: Alex Lister, 2015).

After a study of Brown's statement of accounts, and thorough enquiries involving witnesses present, Tattersall's ruled in favour of Brown on 'evidence put forward to the Committee that there was no bet made.' While it is not necessary to go through each case of a similar nature, this example is both representative and revealing. There is an insight into the haphazard way bets were called out at the races that betrays the difficulty in recording them accurately, while it is also evident that Tattersall's was the principal arbiter of betting

⁶¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 22 May 1885, 3.

disputes between metropolitan punters and bookmakers – the incident had, after all, taken place at a QTC race meeting. The fact that payment from Taylor was received shortly after the verdict signifies the respect in which the ruling was held, and the minutes demonstrate that this was the case in every instance recorded.⁶²

The Club mediated on betting disputes and acted as a registry for bookmakers well into the twentieth century, with lists of defaulters regularly exchanged with the Victoria Racing Club and Sydney Tattersall's. While bookmakers gained a heightened sense of legitimacy by registering with Tattersall's, they were afforded reduced fielding fees at the Club's race meetings. Of course, they also paid more for their membership, with a fifty-guinea entrance fee and three-guinea subscription in 1900, compared with a two-guinea entrance and one-guinea subscription for ordinary members.⁶³ The prominence of bookmakers within the Club's identity was further emphasised at the beginning of 1904, when it was declared that two of the eight-man Tattersall's Committee were to be bookmaking members.⁶⁴

The Club's position was threatened that same year, however, when the QTC moved to register its own bookmakers. This prompted a visit from a Tattersall's delegation of Vice President George Morrison and three committeemen, who asked the QTC to reconsider the proposal, while many bookmakers threatened to strike at a forthcoming QTC race meeting.⁶⁵ The QTC then considered abolishing bookmakers from Brisbane racecourses all together at a Special Meeting in August 1906, with the motion highlighting the success of New Zealand's Auckland Racing Club in restricting speculation to the totalisator only. The proposal was ultimately defeated, no doubt to the relief of Tattersall's and its bookmaking members.⁶⁶ In the end, most bookmakers simply registered with both clubs. Indeed, the most prominent bookmakers in Brisbane during the first half of the twentieth century – including the likes of William Danaher, Dan Elborne, Reg Harvey and George Reynolds – belonged to both Tattersall's and the QTC.⁶⁷

⁶² TCM 1893.

⁶³ TCM 1900.

⁶⁴ *Telegraph*, 19 January 1904, 2; Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 200.

⁶⁵ *Telegraph*, 27 April 1904, 4; Coughlan, *QTC*, 176.

⁶⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 September 1906, 11.

⁶⁷ Coughlan, *QTC*, 179.

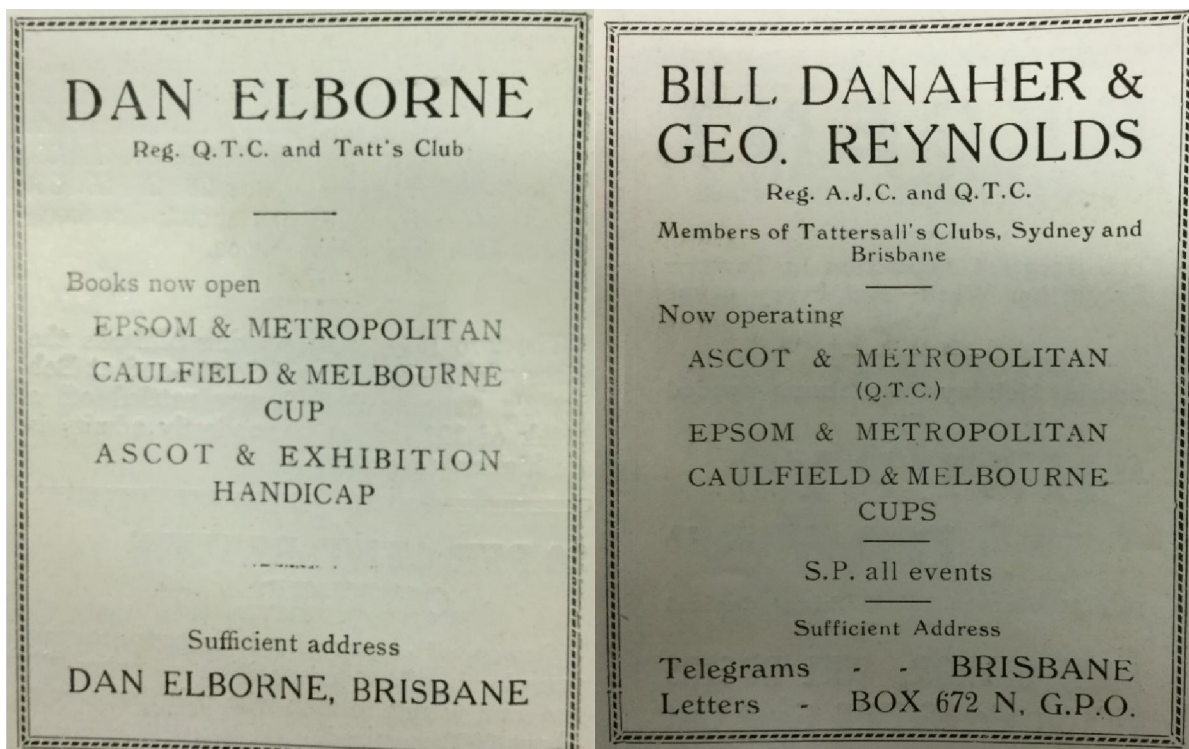


Fig. 4. Advertisements showing the registration and membership of some of Brisbane's leading bookmakers in the 1930s. (Photo: *Tattersall's Club Magazine*, August 1930).

Tattersall's role as principal arbitrator was also contested in April 1904 when the QTC amended its rules to grant itself similar responsibility.⁶⁸ Despite this alteration, however, the QTC was still referring cases to Tattersall's many years later. For example, in November 1924, the QTC asked the Club to adjudicate on a dispute that occurred at its September race meeting. Punter M. J. Trihey had backed three doubles with two bookmaking firms, Jack Sears and Bob Kinealy, who had both extended their credit facilities. Trihey subsequently won a total of £4,700 – including £3,000 off Sears alone – but was refused any winnings as the bookmakers believed he would have been unable to pay had he lost. Having heard almost four hours' worth of evidence, President Richard 'Pat' Ranson felt that even though Trihey was 'a very bad character who had done everything possible to take Sears and all the bookmakers down,' the bookmakers had nonetheless welcomed his bets and were liable to pay out. The Committee ultimately voted in favour of Sears, however, perhaps wary of Trihey's reputation as the 'Paper Money Punter.'⁶⁹ At the next Committee meeting in

⁶⁸ *Telegraph*, 27 April 1904, 4.

⁶⁹ *Truth* (Sydney), 7 December 1924, 15.

December, Ranson complained that he had been besieged and insulted by the public and believed that ‘a grave mistake had been made.’⁷⁰ The press were also critical, with one report stating that Tattersall’s would become ‘the laughing stock of Australia’ if the decision was left to stand.⁷¹ The Club’s lawyer later advised against publishing the case evidence, believing the Committee’s decision to be morally correct – if not legally.⁷²

Such instances of poor judgement from the Club appeared rare, although the case did influence the Committee’s decision to limit its authority in adjudicating thereafter. For example, in January 1925 it was decided that the Club had no jurisdiction in the matter between Dan Elborne and W. E. Roberts, as the latter was not a member of Tattersall’s. In 1926, the policy was confirmed in an amendment to Rule 26 that read: ‘The Committee shall take recognisance of an arbitrator upon bets connected with horseracing between members and bookmaker members of the Club only.’⁷³ Internal disputes still arose at monthly Committee meetings, with members who had not settled their debts instructed to appear before the Committee to explain why they should not be declared defaulters. Though the Club’s position as an adjudicator in betting disputes declined over the course of the century, some cases were still heard in the late 1970s. Kevin Kent, a long-term bookmaking member of the Club who joined in 1958, recalled Tattersall’s arbitrating on ‘lots of big wages,’ adding that they were ‘usually very diplomatic.’⁷⁴ It was during Tattersall’s earliest years, however, that its contribution to upholding the integrity of betting in Brisbane was at its most prominent. The Club’s arbitration and bookmaking registry arrived at a time when little control existed over wagering, and when no other institution offered the same protection.

iii) Settling Day

One of the most recognisable features of Tattersall’s Club during its first 100 years was the weekly Settling Day. While large bets were laid with bookmakers registered at Tattersall’s – who ‘called the card’ at the Club on the night before the races – it was the settling that followed which drew the biggest crowds. When betting at the racecourse with a bookmaker

⁷⁰ TCM 1924.

⁷¹ *Manillia Express* (Manillia, NSW), 19 December 1924, 3.

⁷² TCM 1924.

⁷³ *Queensland Times*, 29 January 1926, 9.

⁷⁴ Interview with Merv Cooper, Kevin Kent and Stan Schluter, conducted by John McCoy, 14 August 2006 (reference hereafter shortened to Tattersall’s Bookies, 2006).

on the Saturday, money would typically not change hands until the following week when the punter or bookmaker would settle their debt. The occasion was certified in the Club Rules in 1892 when it was declared that all bets were 'to be paid on Settling Day,' and a designated Settling Room was a feature of all Tattersall's early homes.⁷⁵ The practice did disappear briefly in 1903, when Committeeman P. J. O'Shea expressed his regret that 'as the Club was a betting institution, the bookmakers did not show a greater interest in it by making their settlements there.'⁷⁶ At the time, the Club was more focused upon its racing duties at Deagon than its betting activities, which probably inspired the brief establishment of a City Tattersall's Club in Brisbane in January 1903.⁷⁷ Settling was revived at Tattersall's under Secretary John Hollander, however, who successfully negotiated with Brisbane's Police Commissioner to provide constable protection every Monday morning in 1904.⁷⁸

Perhaps the most iconic photograph in Tattersall's history depicts the first Settling Day at its current premises on 26 August 1926. Over sixty bookmaking members can be seen in what was clearly the age when one was said 'not to be dressed properly unless you wore a hat.'⁷⁹ Wearing hats inside Tattersall's was common among members and bookmakers, and legend has it that the custom originated in the Club's early days to assist a quick escape in the event of a police raid.⁸⁰ Settling took place at the Club between 11am and 1pm every Monday. Guests were not allowed to enter the premises during this time, and even members struggled to gain entry during the peak settling years as it was so busy. Kevin Kent described the 1930s through to the 1950s as the 'big boom time' as far as racing and settling was concerned, though other members recall being unable to move within the Club Room as late as the 1970s, when the bar was 'four-deep' during settling.⁸¹ Race day attendances were significantly higher in this age – a Tattersall's race meeting in the 1960s would routinely attract over 15,000 spectators – and this resulted in a lot of business for

⁷⁵ TCM 1892.

⁷⁶ TCM 1903.

⁷⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 20 January 1903, 7.

⁷⁸ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 98.

⁷⁹ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 13.

⁸⁰ Interview with Jack Delaney, conducted by Helen Gregory, 2 May 1991. The *Suppression of Gambling Act of 1895* had, among prohibiting lotteries such as those run by George Adams, also outlawed betting houses, though in the case of clubs this was rarely enforced (*Brisbane Courier*, 28 June 1895, 4).

⁸¹ Tattersall's Bookies, 2006; Interview with Eric Oxenford, conducted by the author, 5 May 2015.

bookmakers. The Club had almost 100 bookmaking members in the 1950s, and they regularly filled the Club Room with four to a table during settling.



Fig. 5. Tattersall's bookmakers gather for the first Settling Day at the Club's new premises in Edward Street on 26 August 1926. (Photo: Tattersall's Club archives).

Although non-members were not permitted inside Tattersall's, they could settle debts or collect winnings in the area beneath the Club known as 'the dungeon.' Stan Schluter – a bookmaking member since 1960 who became a leader of the Eagle Farm 'rail-ring' in the 1980s – recalled that most of the bookmakers upstairs also had a representative below: 'You'd get back up and then the phone would ring: Mr Schluter downstairs!' The dungeon was nearly always full, and facilitated non-registered and Starting Price (SP) bookmakers as well as those who were registered but did not belong to Tattersall's.⁸² SP bookmakers operated off-course and offered starting price odds. While they made little contribution to the racing industry – and paid no tax on their earnings – they still enjoyed a strong

⁸² Coughlan, *QTC*, 179; Tattersall's Bookies, 2006.

following, particularly in country areas where access to the races was limited.⁸³ ‘Leroy Brown stayed on the shady side of town, didn’t he?’ muses life member Eric Oxenford, who joined the Club in 1971. ‘Well the boys down there were the Leroy Brown’s.’⁸⁴ Alternatively, non-members sometimes settled at the doorway, with the doorman alerting the bookmaker to a punter’s presence.

While the occasion became iconic within the Club, it was also something of an institution within Brisbane itself. There was some competition from the Queensland Bookmakers’ Club, which opened in Queen Street in 1941 and boasted 430 members within five years.⁸⁵ It had formed largely in response to the prestigious nature of Tattersall’s – which had begun to only accept bookmakers holding a Paddock Licence as members – and was an offshoot of the QTC’s St Leger and Flat Bookmakers’ Association.⁸⁶ Given the popularity of settling at Tattersall’s throughout the mid-twentieth century, however, and its accommodation of both the city’s leading bookmakers on the main floor and non-member bookmakers below, it is unsurprising that the Club remained the principal venue for metropolitan settling.

With the numbers involved and the certainty that someone had made money, Settling Day was as much a jovial occasion as a time of business. It was originally accompanied by free-flowing champagne, with Tattersall’s footing the bill – a practice criticised as ‘misuse of the Club’s funds’ by Treasurer J. A. Phillips in May 1886.⁸⁷ Such generosity was reciprocated over the next century. ‘It was custom of the famous old bookmaker, Abe Barrington, to buy a bottle of champagne for his biggest loser at his settling,’ recalled Ray Conway, who joined the Tattersall’s staff as messenger in 1915.⁸⁸ It was also common practice for winning owners to open the bar during Settling Day.⁸⁹ ‘If the owner had a big win, he was going to give the trainer something to use on beer at settling time,’ confirmed Kent. Frequently, ‘you couldn’t get your elbows on the bar,’ which often remained busy until close.⁹⁰ Another long-term Tattersall’s bookmaker, Merv Cooper – who joined the Club in 1972 – recalled finishing

⁸³ Cohen, “The TAB in Queensland,” 48.

⁸⁴ Tattersall’s Bookies, 2006; Oxenford, 2015.

⁸⁵ *Courier-Mail*, 30 September 1941, 6; *Courier-Mail*, 31 May 1946, 3.

⁸⁶ ‘About Us,’ <http://www.bookiesclub.com.au/about-us/>, accessed 6 July 2017.

⁸⁷ *Telegraph*, 26 June 1939, 18.

⁸⁸ Ray Conway handwritten recollections, 1958 (hereafter shortened to Conway, 1958).

⁸⁹ Interview with Bill Boyan, conducted by Helen Gregory, 7 May 1991.

⁹⁰ Tattersall’s Bookies, 2006.

up at 10pm one evening before motor racing a regular punter around the tramlines on Queen Street, while Schluter added that speeding off the wrong way down Elizabeth Street at 3am following a settling session was not completely unheard of.⁹¹

One particularly memorable occasion at Settling Day involved life member Jack Honey, who joined Tattersall's in 1957. In 1971, Honey collected huge winnings for the Stradbroke Cup Winner *Divide and Rule*. Equipped with a huge David Jones department store carrier bag, Honey circled the settling tables and gathered up bundles of cash on behalf of the horse's owner. Accompanied by two friends – Eric Oxenford and Alan Spencer, whom the press referred to as bodyguards – Honey returned to a taxi parked on Edward Street where the owner, having been warned off the racetrack, was waiting. It took two full briefcases to transfer the winnings.⁹² When asked how much money was involved at a special lunch at the Club to mark his ninetieth-birthday in January 2006, Honey 'beamed his big smile' and simply said, 'I forget.'⁹³ This was typical of a character whom Kent labelled as 'the most respectful man I've ever met in racing.'⁹⁴

Not every method of collection was so stylish. Former *Courier-Mail* turf editor Bart Sinclair recalls punter Mike O'Callaghan's unique approach during Settling Day. As O'Callaghan would get 'a fair bit of drink on' at the races on Saturday, he was often unsure as to whether he had won or lost. He would walk up to the table at settling, and if the bookmaker looked up he would ask, 'How much?' – but if the drawer came out, he would simply take whatever the bookmaker offered him.⁹⁵ The routine also serves as a good example of the honour among the bookmaking members at Tattersall's, and Cooper believed that 'it was all very honest' for such a competitive business. In addition, the bookmakers often accommodated those who were working or running late. Kent also recalled that certain characters were known to run out of money, but allowances were nearly always made. 'Previously, if you didn't settle by 1pm, you were a defaulter, but you'd never put them through the ringer,' he said. 'At the very least you had an arrangement to settle within a week.'⁹⁶

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Oxenford, 2015.

⁹³ *Tattler*, Autumn 2006.

⁹⁴ Tattersall's Bookies, 2006.

⁹⁵ Oxenford, 2015; Interview with Bart Sinclair, conducted by the author, 5 May 2015.

⁹⁶ Tattersall's Bookies, 2006.

Club records and members' recollections do not record many difficulties during Settling Day, and while this may demonstrate an unwillingness to tarnish the memory of an iconic Club pastime, it appears a genuine testimony to the good spirit of the occasion. 'After all, it was a gentlemen's club, and non-members would just settle in the basement of course,' remarked Claude Jacobs, who was Tattersall's President between 1971 and 1975. Jacobs also recalled the frequent occasions of generosity displayed by bookmakers on Settling Day, such as when Darwin had been hit by a cyclone in 1974. 'I collected something like \$30,000 from the bookmakers in cash before lunch,' he said. 'Any charities that came up, they were always very generous, and the members too. I just walked around and asked them – I don't think one bookmaker refused a donation.'⁹⁷ Such munificence had been typical since World War One, when £103 was raised in a few minutes during settling in honour of a member's son who had been awarded the Military Cross for his efforts in France in 1917.⁹⁸

Despite being an important part of Club life and a scene of great character, friendship and integrity, Settling Day gradually declined as the twentieth century progressed. For many, the Great Bookie Robbery in Melbourne in April 1976 – when six men stole \$15 million from a settling occasion at the Victorian Club – signalled the end of large settling assemblies. Contrarily, Cooper, Kent and Schluter maintained that it did not really affect the day at Tattersall's or provoke any feeling of vulnerability. Schluter recalled settling in the Club as late as 1987, when 'some bookies would still come in – just on one side of the room.'⁹⁹ The scene was a far cry, however, from the heyday of settling at the Club that the likes of Oxenford recall so vividly. 'To put it into words, it was just unbelievable really,' he says. 'It was an atmosphere, and what Tattersall's Club really is, or was in those days.'¹⁰⁰

iv) Raiders of the Arcade

The mid-1930s witnessed significant political inquiry into thoroughbred racing and wagering in Queensland amid falling race day attendances across the state. The predominant issue concerning Tattersall's was gambling at the Club, especially SP bookmaking within its Arcade (which formed part of the Club's premises from 1926). Tattersall's showed some initiative

⁹⁷ Interview with Claude Jacobs, conducted by Helen Gregory, 24 July 1991.

⁹⁸ Longhurst, *Friendship*, 110.

⁹⁹ Tattersall's Bookies, 2006

¹⁰⁰ Oxenford, 2015.

towards tackling the problem in January 1931, when it declared that ‘no betting could take place in the Club on Saturdays or race days after a meeting had started.’¹⁰¹ This was still a small step considering that, technically, betting was prohibited everywhere aside from a licenced racecourse on a registered race day. By the end of 1932, meetings had reportedly taken place between the committees of Tattersall’s, the QTC and the Brisbane Amateur Turf Club (BATC) – the latter having formed in 1923 – regarding the ‘SP betting shop evil.’¹⁰²

Given the wagering on its premises, it is probable that the Committee faced some criticism from the other two clubs. Attacks within the press also followed in early 1933. *Turf Life*, for instance, contrasted the Club’s indulgence of ‘snide betting and after-hours booze’ with the persecution of the ‘working man’s SP merchants.’¹⁰³ The article also blamed Tattersall’s and its ‘flashily dressed individuals’ for the small attendances at racecourses, and claimed the Club only held its race days to subsidise an ‘illegal betting and sly grog-drinking house.’¹⁰⁴

It was increasingly, however, the Arcade that received more attention. In 1929, only three of its leases were registered to the more respectably-titled ‘Commission Agents,’ but by 1934 nearly all the shops were known to be occupied by SP bookmakers. As well as the social demand for gambling amenities, this change reflected the effect of the Depression in forcing struggling dressmakers and milliners to vacate the spaces.¹⁰⁵ During such a challenging economic climate, rental income was an indispensable source of revenue for the Club, although such a tenant came at its own cost. Throughout the early 1930s, police carried out raids of suspected SP betting houses across Brisbane including a hotel on Queen Street in December 1932, premises on Station Road in May 1933, and a billiard saloon on Edward Street in August 1935.¹⁰⁶ Any sense of invulnerability at Tattersall’s appeared misguided as the bookmaking offices inside the Arcade were similarly raided on 21 July 1934. Joe West was one of four ‘well-known racing men’ charged with keeping a common gaming house, while a clerk at another office observed himself to be in a ‘funny predicament’ when caught surrounded by betting paraphernalia on the walls.¹⁰⁷ A defending lawyer claimed the betting

¹⁰¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 30 January 1931, 4.

¹⁰² *Telegraph*, 15 December 1932, 2.

¹⁰³ *Turf Life*, 21 February 1933.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 143.

¹⁰⁶ *Telegraph*, 12 December 1932, 16; *Brisbane Courier*, 18 May 1933, 7; *Sunday Mail*, 18 August 1935, 5.

¹⁰⁷ *Daily Standard* (Brisbane), 23 July 1934, 1.

offices were licenced by the Club and had not previously been objected to by the police, though quite how Tattersall's possessed the authority to licence these men was unclear.¹⁰⁸

The Club's harbouring of illegal betting activities attracted more attention the following year when, in September 1935, a Royal Commission on Racing and Gaming was initiated under State Premier Forgan Smith. The Commission inquired into 'the operation and effect of the *Racing Acts*, starting price betting, and wagering generally and all other matters concerning horseracing, its conduct, management and control.'¹⁰⁹ This broad scope called upon many personalities involved within the thoroughbred industry and among wider society to provide evidence and insight. For example, Zina Cumbrae Stewart – President of the National Council of Women – claimed first-hand experience of many instances of the misery and poverty caused by gambling, and felt that present legislation was insufficient to suppress SP betting.¹¹⁰ Canon Garland of the Church of England felt that the desire to get rich quick was threatening the purpose of working for a living, and strongly opposed the potential licencing of SP shops. While Father Barry of the Catholic Church did not think it was immoral to bet, he believed it to be a social evil the moment a man bet beyond his means, something SP and street betting encouraged among those who could not afford to attend the racecourse.¹¹¹

In contrast, J. Aboud – representing the interests of SP bookmakers – offered a staunch defence of the practice. 'The men are supplying the wants of the working man and the want of 75% of the people of the state,' he claimed. 'I venture to say that off the course betting cannot be stopped.'¹¹² Aboud argued that the only real opposition came from the monetary concern of racing clubs, and highlighted that there were plenty of registered bookmakers who were beginning to offer SP services too (such as those operating within the Arcade offices).¹¹³ There were also other factors to consider aside from SP betting that were harming race day attendances. The betting tax of 1s., which had been passed on to the public, was perhaps the most roundly criticised by those called upon by the Commission. D. O'Mara – who was counsel for the BATC – believed that it drove people from the grandstand and paddock enclosures to the cheapest divisions of the course and was against

¹⁰⁸ *Daily Standard*, 31 July 1932, 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Telegraph*, 23 September 1935, 1.

¹¹⁰ *Truth*, 27 October 1935, 21.

¹¹¹ *Telegraph*, 23 October 1935, 2.

¹¹² *Telegraph*, 13 December 1935, 15.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

the interests of racing generally.¹¹⁴ Godfrey Morgan, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and President of the Queensland Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association, was firmly against the tax and believed it had directly contributed to the growth of the SP trade:

When it is possible for people to make bets away from the racecourse, avoiding the obligation of the betting tax, it is no wonder that the revenue to the government from betting taxation has suppressed tremendously. I do not see why racing should be taxed any more than any other amusement. These mushroom SP shops will continue to flourish unless people are encouraged to go to the racecourse.¹¹⁵

The government had introduced the tax to try and arrest its declining income from racing. While over £100,000 of revenue came from betting and totalisator taxes in the 1926/27 season, the figure had decreased annually thereafter until the new tax was introduced in 1930/31, when income to the state was £94,000. Since the subsequent growth of SP shops, however, revenue had begun to fall again and had dropped to below £80,000 in 1934/35.¹¹⁶ Bookmakers such as Dan Elborne also believed punters should not have to pay the betting tax, and claimed that the bookmakers would be happy to carry the burden provided it was reduced.¹¹⁷ There was also criticism of both public broadcasting and the press for effectively encouraging off-course gambling. Garland believed that ‘the wireless brings it right into the home’ and should be stopped, while Morgan similarly felt that the publication of prices in newspapers before races should be prohibited as had been implemented in Victoria.¹¹⁸ O’Mara felt that both practices put the proprietors of betting shops and their patrons in ‘practically as good a position as people who paid to see the races.’ He also criticised jockey ‘tipsters’ and believed that the press should be restricted to summing up a horse’s form.¹¹⁹ Despite such external factors, Tattersall’s was also the focus of much criticism throughout the Commission. While not singling out the Club directly, QTC Chairman P. J. O’Shea had already questioned why his own club should ‘provide a beautiful course and excellent prizemoney to keep hundreds of gambling dens in the city.’¹²⁰ The QTC’s annual profits had dropped from £13,000 to £1,000 in nine years, and it was perhaps unsurprising that its

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *Telegraph*, 24 September 1935, 2.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ *Truth*, 27 October 1935, 21.

¹¹⁸ *Telegraph*, 24 September 1935, 2; *Telegraph*, 23 October 1935, 2.

¹¹⁹ *Telegraph*, 13 December 1935, 15.

¹²⁰ *Courier-Mail*, 27 July 1935, 14.

counsel, N. J. Moynihan, attacked Tattersall's so vehemently. Moynihan complained that the Arcade's shops were 'breaking the law without any suggestion of fear,' particularly as Tattersall's had arranged for a police officer to control traffic outside the Arcade. This was a 'shocking travesty of justice' and an 'almost quasi-official cognisance' of the law being broken. 'If the laws cannot be enforced,' Moynihan concluded, 'then God help the community.'¹²¹ Morgan also alluded to this point in his testimony, claiming that the police officer on duty must feel humiliated 'as he cannot do anything about it,' and believed that the law enforcement should be given full power to distribute 'more stringent penalties.'¹²²

O'Mara, meanwhile, queried why Tattersall's was even allowed to race when it was 'the main offender of betting on its premises.'¹²³ The Chairman of the BATC, T. M. Ahern, was even more scathing. He believed that off-course betting was two-thirds of the reason why good men and good racers were leaving the racing business, and that Tattersall's was the 'main bugbear.' Ahern said that the 'root of evil was in and under Tattersall's Club' – 'under' referring specifically to the Arcade – and alleged that 'there was as much business done there as all over Brisbane.' He was also highly critical of the Club for closing its premises on its own race days, while remaining open when other clubs held their race meetings.¹²⁴

Tattersall's President W. J. (Bill) Healy found himself and the Club under the microscope when he was asked to provide evidence in September 1935. With persistent questioning from O'Mara and Moynihan, Healy performed a masterclass in 'playing the straight bat':

O'Mara: Do you know that there are certain betting shops in Tattersall's Arcade, which are rented by your Committee to other persons?

Healy: I know that there are shops rented.

O'Mara: Do you mean to say that you do not know what trade is carried on there?

Healy: I do not know what they were let for in the first place.

O'Mara: Do you know what calling is carried on in them now?

Healy: Bookmaking.

O'Mara: You own a premises in that vicinity?

Healy: Yes.

O'Mara: Who are your tenants there?

Healy: That is my own business.

.....

O'Mara: If the commission thought it wise to favour or recommend the registration of betting shops, do you think your club should be registered as a betting shop?

¹²¹ *Courier-Mail*, 14 December 1935, 19.

¹²² *Telegraph*, 24 September 1935, 2.

¹²³ *Telegraph*, 13 December 1935, 15.

¹²⁴ *Courier-Mail*, 22 October 1935, 14.

Healy: I could not say.

O'Mara: Have you any opinion on that?

Healy: No opinion at all. A lot of people who come into the Club never bet.

O'Mara: Do you know whether betting is more prevalent in Tattersall's Arcade than in any other place in the state?

Healy: I could not tell you. I have never had a bet there in my life.

O'Mara: Do you ever visit the Arcade on race days?

Healy: I go through there.

O'Mara: Haven't you seen a crowd around the betting shops there?

Healy: I have seen crowds there, and in other places too. I could not say there is illicit betting.

O'Mara: Would you not say that it is the point around which illicit betting centres?

Healy: I don't know.¹²⁵

The focus upon the Arcade prompted the Club to issue a notice to tenants in October 1935 that stated bookmakers 'must not use their offices for SP betting between 9 and 5 o' clock on race days.'¹²⁶ A Special Committee Meeting on 15 November 1935 also considered closing the shops for one month due to 'increasing undesirables congregating on race days,' though such action was never undertaken.¹²⁷ These efforts appeared ineffective in quelling mounting pressure, and at 11:30am on 18 March 1936 the Arcade was raided for a second time when seven plain-clothed police officers stormed eight shops inside the premises. As police made an arrest in each shop and seized records of thousands of bets, a large crowd gathered outside the Club's Edward Street entrance which blocked road traffic for some time. Most officers entered the shops without difficulty, though in two instances doors were locked at first sight which resulted in the police having to shatter glass to force entry. One group of men reportedly escaped out of a shop window, and then climbed a ladder to the upper windows of the Club before emerging behind the bar, no doubt to the amusement of those members present.¹²⁸

Eight defendants were charged at City Police Court the next morning with keeping and using a common gaming house, though only the former charge was pursued. Of the defendants, only three were actual bookmakers. The others, including Kevin Fox (in William Danaher's office), were clerks or labourers who were effectively there to 'take the hit.' As Danaher's son, John, later reflected: 'Put it this way, people knew not to be there on that particular

¹²⁵ *Courier-Mail*, 26 September 1935, 10.

¹²⁶ *Telegraph*, 2 October 1935, 1.

¹²⁷ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 157.

¹²⁸ *Courier-Mail*, 19 March 1936, 16.

day.¹²⁹ How this came to be known is unclear, though it was rumoured that a tip-off came from Police Commissioner Cecil James Carroll, who was also a member of the Royal Commission. The fact that only one of those charged actually bothered to appear in court the next day certainly suggested an air of indifference; the seven others seemed content to forfeit the £25 bail charge and return to work immediately.¹³⁰



Fig. 6. Crowds gather outside the entrance to Tattersall's Arcade at the Club's Edward Street premises during the police raid on 18 March 1936. (Photo: *Telegraph*, 18 March 1936).

Publicly, Tattersall's response to the raid was decisive. Secretary Phillip Stewart reportedly notified those occupying the raided offices that they had until the end of March to vacate the premises.¹³¹ At the close of April 1936, however, reports suggested that SP betting was ongoing in the Arcade while the apparent issue of preferential class treatment under the law remained. The *Daily Standard* wrote that gambling was taking place 'as briskly and merrily as ever in the betting shops of Tattersall's Arcade' while nearby 'one and three

¹²⁹ Interview with John Danaher, conducted by the author, 12 June 2015.

¹³⁰ *Telegraph*, 19 March 1936, 1.

¹³¹ *Telegraph*, 24 March 1936, 1.

penny punters' were taken and fined 'for the horrible crime of having listened to a race broadcast in a shop devoted to bets.'¹³² The article also claimed that the Committee had outlined its own 'conditions for breaking the law' by instructing its SP leases to arrange shop windows innocently with dummy packets of cigarettes and sticks of chocolate, while no bet under five shillings was to be taken as all 'working class bets' were barred.¹³³ Although this may have been an attempt to avert punters who could not really afford to bet, it is fair to conclude that the Club probably felt more secure in facilitating gambling for higher classes.

While there is some debate as to whether the police raids represent an episode of infamy or folklore in the history of Tattersall's, their overall significance can be questioned. Certainly, the Club received more negative publicity in the mid-1930s than at any other point in the twentieth century, and it was clearly a challenging time for the Club in terms of public and political perception. However, the 1936 police raid appeared to be more of a gesture of appeasement in response to the Royal Commission and its criticism than a pivotal turning point in the Club's use. It should also be remembered that the raids took place within the Arcade, and not inside the Club itself. From Tattersall's perspective, SP bookmaking would have existed anyway and there was a great public demand that the Arcade catered for, while its membership also utilised such services. It was also important to fill its Arcade with paying lessees during the Depression. In addition, although numerous raids took place elsewhere, the actual illegality of SP bookmaking lacked any real conviction as it was so widespread, and often law enforcement simply struggled to keep up. The fact that there was a police officer present outside the Arcade on busy days to effectively ensure a smooth operation highlights the contradictory and reactionary nature of the raid that followed.

The Royal Commission published its findings in July 1936 and, unsurprisingly, was 'unable to furnish a unanimous report' given the widespread issues it had encountered within a complex industry. It is not necessary to list its findings here, but it was perhaps telling that Police Commissioner Carroll published his own minority report concluding that 'suitable facilities should be provided for off-the-course betting' – an inevitability that Tattersall's and wider society had already appeared to accept and capitalise upon.¹³⁴ A reduction in betting

¹³² *Daily Standard*, 21 April 1936, 5.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Telegraph*, 22 July 1936, 8.

tax was put in place, though conversely no restrictions on broadcasting were implemented. The Club escaped any further censure and seemingly continued to operate on its own terms.

In the aftermath of the Commission, state parliament member C. W. Conroy reiterated that 'big betting goes on at Tattersall's Club, and I am sure that the police would be only too pleased to have an opportunity of raiding it – but there is too much protection given to it.' Conroy also conceded that it was unlikely that enough evidence would be found to bring about any convictions.¹³⁵ Internally, betting restrictions had tightened to the point where one member complained at the 1938 Annual Meeting that it 'was the only Tattersall's in the world where a member cannot place a bet.'¹³⁶ Some years later in January 1952, another Royal Commission into off-course betting took place. Tattersall's Secretary Robert Mullin confidently declared to the Commission that not one registered bookmaker at the Club bet off-course, and if a member was found guilty of off-course wagering he would probably be expelled.¹³⁷ By this time, more traditional lessees occupied the Arcade in place of the SP bookmakers, and it is fair to conclude that its reputation as a hub of illegal gambling had largely diminished.

v) Tattersall's Racing Club and the Totalisator Administration Board

After the failure of Deagon racecourse at the beginning of the twentieth century, Tattersall's recommenced racing at Eagle Farm in 1904 largely thanks to the cooperation of the QTC.¹³⁸ Thereafter, the Club generally held three race meetings per year and up to five by the late 1930s. Highlights included the legendary Challenge Stakes match race between the four best miler-horses in Queensland in August 1928. Reportedly the 'most thrilling event of the year,' it was won by *High Syce* at a then record time for a Queensland mile of 1.37¼.¹³⁹ The re-emergence of the Tattersall's Cup in 1924 – having disappeared in the 1890s during depression – was also significant. By the 1930s, it was one of the state's premier races alongside the QTC's Brisbane Cup and the BATC's Doomben Cup, and ran every year aside from 1942.¹⁴⁰ During World War Two, both Eagle Farm and Doomben racecourses – the

¹³⁵ *Telegraph*, 13 November 1936, 1.

¹³⁶ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 158.

¹³⁷ *Brisbane Telegraph*, 24 January 1953, 1.

¹³⁸ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 99.

¹³⁹ *Sunday Mail*, 19 August 1928, 1

¹⁴⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 21 August 1933, 4.

latter having opened in 1933 under the BATC – were requisitioned as military camps for American forces arriving in Brisbane in December 1941. Tattersall's instead raced at Albion Park on a restricted schedule before returning to Eagle Farm in 1946.¹⁴¹ The mid-twentieth century then saw two significant developments within Tattersall's Club and the wider Queensland thoroughbred industry. The first was the formation of a separate Tattersall's Racing Club (TRC) on 21 February 1956, and the second was the establishment of the Totalisator Administration Board (TAB) in Queensland in 1962.

The TRC formed to comply with the requirements of the *Racing and Betting Act* of 1954, which aimed to eliminate proprietary racing that sought solely to profit from the sport. Among several important assertions of the Act – it stated, for example, that the internal management of racing in Queensland was to remain with the principal clubs (e.g. the QTC, CQRA, NQRA and Rockhampton Jockey Club) – its stipulation that racing profits must only be used to advance the thoroughbred industry was most relevant to Tattersall's.¹⁴² The Club's position in this regard had been a source of debate for some time. In 1906, a member had suggested that 'it would be much better if the profit made from racing is devoted to racing purposes, and that the statement of receipts and expenditure should be made apart from other club workings.'¹⁴³ An article the previous year had attacked Tattersall's for paying rental fees so 'paltry as barely to cover the cost of putting the track enclosures and stands in order again,' while making profits that were devoted to causes other than racing. Secretary Hollander launched a passionate defence in an open letter to the press and argued that the Club's last two race meetings had resulted in losses, while £50 had gone towards the course and the provision of free admission for QTC members. 'My committee has the interests of the racehorse and its owner quite at heart,' said Hollander, 'and would gladly increase the prizemoney with any profits made at racing.' He also pointed out that 'the bookmaking members of Tattersall's contribute considerably to the income of all racing clubs.'¹⁴⁴ *Harking Back* later reflected that Tattersall's had played 'a prominent part in promoting meetings and entering liberally in the way of prizemoney,' and added that most of its profits were used to build up the value of its programmes, 'thereby assisting to encourage and maintain

¹⁴¹ Coughlan, *QTC*, 24.

¹⁴² *Central Queensland Herald* (Rockhampton, QLD), 23 June 1955, 15.

¹⁴³ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1906, 7.

¹⁴⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 28 March 1905, 7.

the highest standard of racing at Eagle Farm.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, in 1939 *The Telegraph* wrote that it was ‘a recognised fact that Tattersall’s Club is not interested in the profits of racing as such, and is satisfied if its meetings do not cost it money.’¹⁴⁶

Regardless of Tattersall’s contribution, however, or the fact that it had always clearly declared its racing profits, the 1954 Act certified the need for a separate entity under law. An incorporated TRC was therefore established and demonstrated the Club’s commitment to both its heritage and the thoroughbred industry. After all, if Tattersall’s was only interested in making money out of racing, it could have simply cut its ties to the sport following the Act. The TRC would be served by the main Club Committee, while it continued to facilitate everything associated with its race days – although the leasing of the QTC’s racecourse continued. Its financial year would reflect the racing season and run from the first day of August until 31 July the following year. Upon its inception, the TRC coordinated with the QTC, BATC and the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club to organise a successful winter racing carnival. This included the Brisbane Cup and Tattersall’s Cup in June and the Doomben Cup in July, and the carnival quickly became the annual highlight of the Queensland racing calendar.¹⁴⁷ Within the TRC, almost 1,500 Tattersall’s members had paid the £1.1s. joining fee out of a total membership of 2,200 by 1958, which demonstrated that over two-thirds of members still held an active interest in thoroughbred racing.¹⁴⁸

There was some discussion towards using the racing profits to acquire a new racecourse in 1956, although nothing eventuated. A stark reminder of the Club’s position occurred in February 1958, however, when the QTC increased its leasing charge of Eagle Farm from £1,250 to £2,500 ahead of the Club’s race meeting in March. One committeeman claimed that the demand ‘seemed designed to force TRC out of existence’ – especially considering that rent was £400-a-day when racing resumed at Eagle Farm after World War Two – and there was speculation that the TRC might transfer its activities to Doomben.¹⁴⁹ In fairness, the QTC had recently erected a new £400,000 grandstand at Eagle Farm, and *The Telegraph* stressed that consideration was given to ‘any undue financial burden’ upon the TRC as the

¹⁴⁵ Collins & Thompson, *Harking Back*, 45.

¹⁴⁶ *Telegraph*, 26 June 1939, 19.

¹⁴⁷ Tattersall’s Racing Club Annual Report (TRCAR) 1956/57; Coughlan, *QTC*, 29.

¹⁴⁸ TRCAR 1957/58.

¹⁴⁹ *Courier-Mail*, 24 February 1958.

QTC was aware of the long-term cordial relationship between the two clubs.¹⁵⁰ While a loss of over £1,100 was recorded in Tattersall's racing activities that year – not helped by a rain-affected June meeting – profits recovered to £2,500 in 1960 and £1,500 in 1961, and confirmed the TRC as a viable entity moving forward with three race meetings per season.¹⁵¹

The TAB, meanwhile, concerned the introduction of legalised off-course betting in Queensland in the form of state-owned totalisator machines. This followed the 1961 *Betting Act Amendment Bill* under the Nicklin government (and, specifically, Treasurer and Racing Minister Thomas Hiley).¹⁵² The board itself consisted of racing club-nominated but government-approved members and was chaired by Sir Albert Sakzewski – a former long-term treasurer (1936-52) and president (1953-56) at Tattersall's – until 1981.¹⁵³



Fig. 7. The first meeting of the TAB, which was held at Tattersall's Club on 1 March 1962. Chairman Albert Sakzewski is head of the table, while a future Tattersall's president, Dr John O'Duffy (1993-96), is also present second-right. (Photo: Tattersall's Club archives).

¹⁵⁰ *Telegraph*, 27 February 1965.

¹⁵¹ TRCAR 1957/58, 1959/60 and 1960/61.

¹⁵² Cohen, "The TAB in Queensland," 49.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*; Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 241-2. Sakzewski was knighted in 1972.

In providing legal off-course provisions for wagering, it was hoped that the TAB would both suppress SP betting and facilitate gambling for the non-metropolitan punters unable to attend race meetings. Significantly, the TAB network could also fund a revival of the racing industry through the distribution of its surplus profits. At its inception, dividend payments to punters from the totalisator accounted for 86.5%, which left 13.5% available for TAB operating costs. Any surplus was distributed to an approved list of racing clubs, with the Racing Minister determining the formula, while the Queensland Government would also benefit from an initial 5% of the TAB turnover.¹⁵⁴ Although the TAB system could potentially have an adverse effect on race meeting attendances, if successful it would significantly increase revenue and greatly benefit racing clubs such as the TRC who stood to gain a share of every disbursement. Ultimately, the new system delivered from its first year of operation with a surprisingly high level of surplus.¹⁵⁵ The TRC received an initial sum of £3,150 in November 1963, and this figure rose considerably over the ensuing years:

£8,050 (1964) \$47,700 (1968) \$100,000 (1974) \$172,100 (1982)¹⁵⁶

The Committee maintained its policy to distribute as much prizemoney 'as economically possible' at its race meetings, and the TAB income enabled the TRC to gradually increase its stakes.¹⁵⁷ £21,300 was distributed throughout 1963/64 and, inflation aside, the corresponding rise alongside the TAB disbursement was palpable over subsequent seasons:

\$92,950 (1968/69) \$141,750 (1972/73) \$153,250 (1976/77) \$280,250 (1981/82)¹⁵⁸

The TRC was also able to meet rising rental fees from the QTC, which were \$7,500 per meeting in 1971, \$16,000 in 1976 and \$23,000 by 1983. Expenditure in general rose annually, partly due to the increased rent and prizemoney but also because of taxation. The Queensland Government received 40% of the Club's share of the on-course bookmaker turnover total and fielding fees, as well as totalisator tax and fractions which often surpassed the Club's share of the TAB disbursement. In 1969, for example, the Club received \$47,700 in TAB distribution but paid \$48,650 in tote tax and fractions to the government.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Cohen, "The TAB in Queensland," 49-60.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁵⁶ TRCAR 1963/64, 1964/65, 1968/69, 1974/75, and 1982/83.

¹⁵⁷ TRCAR 1969/70.

¹⁵⁸ TRCAR 1963/64, 1968/69, 1972/73, 1976/77 and 1981/82.

¹⁵⁹ TCAR 1968/69.

Furthermore, any large profits were substantially reduced by federal income tax, so while the Committee was wary of the need to show a small net income, it also stressed that it was not the TRC's objective to post great returns. Astute financial management was duly reflected in its annual profits, as the following figures demonstrate:

\$810 (1965/66) \$800 (1967/68) \$680 (1969/70) \$190 (1975/76)¹⁶⁰

By 1983, the Club's racing activities appeared to be stronger than ever within an industry that was experiencing greater financial turnover than ever before. The TRC was running four established meetings per year – generally in March, June, July and December – having successfully applied for an extra date from the 1965/66 season.¹⁶¹ Annual losses were rare: a deficit of \$2,352 in 1972/73 – largely due to inclement weather throughout the season – was the TRC's first in ten years. In addition to the TAB distribution, the TRC also benefited from an 'ex gratia allowance' to metropolitan clubs amounting to 3% of the on-course totalisator turnover from July 1976, largely through the efforts of Racing Minister Sir Gordon Chalk – whom the TRC praised for his 'sympathetic and understanding attitude' over a number of years.¹⁶² The introduction of the new computerised on-course totalisator (which saw the decommissioning of the Julius machine in 1979) also inspired an upward trend of investment. While the TRC's June and July meetings in 1978 produced combined totalisator takings of nearly \$500,000, the same two meetings in 1979 resulted in a total of almost \$845,000.¹⁶³ In terms of prizemoney, the 1982/83 season saw the TRC distribute nearly \$385,000, a then record amount for the Club and a significant increase on the \$280,000 offered the previous season. Despite managing such substantial sums, the TRC still broke-even at \$214, which epitomised its participation within the thoroughbred industry that was perhaps best summarised by President Robert Needham in 1984: 'We contribute to racing – we seek nothing from it other than the pure enjoyment of being involved.'¹⁶⁴

vi) The decline in Tattersall's racing identity

The issues explored so far represent a fairly limited view of Tattersall's relationship with the Queensland thoroughbred industry over the Club's first 100 years, but they do demonstrate

¹⁶⁰ TRCAR 1965/66, 1967/68, 1969/70 and 1975/76.

¹⁶¹ TRCAR 1965/66 and 1972/73.

¹⁶² TRCAR 1975/76.

¹⁶³ TRCAR 1977/78 and 1978/79.

¹⁶⁴ TRCAR 1982/83; Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 232.

its continuous involvement in racing. By 1983, following the successful emergence of the TRC alongside the unprecedented contribution from the TAB, both the Club's relationship with the industry and the sport itself appeared to be thriving. Even though racing remained a notable characteristic of Tattersall's, however, it had undoubtedly diminished in influence since the Club's establishment. After all, at the beginning of the 1900s, Tattersall's had held up to twelve race meetings a year at its own racecourse, while in the decades either side it was also an important arbiter of betting disputes in Brisbane. Settling Day, meanwhile, had been a remarkably vibrant scene that occupied the main Club Room and the cellar below, and for much of the century it was a key feature of Tattersall's. By the 1980s, however, it had been reduced to one side of the room with only a handful of bookmakers present. Although General Manager Paul Jones still displayed signs carrying the bookmakers' names upon the settling tables, it was only out respect for a great tradition. 'I'm leaving them there in the vain hope the practice will come back,' he said. 'But it won't.'¹⁶⁵

This symbolised the most notable aspect of the decline in Tattersall's racing identity, which concerned the Club's bookmakers. At the turn of the century, their position within the Club had been defining. While the likes of the Brisbane Club included 'a mixture of business professionals,' and the Johnsonian Club was mainly associated with the legal profession, Tattersall's catered for the racing fraternity, and as a betting institution it was both largely characterised by and dependent upon its bookmakers.¹⁶⁶ *Truth* even declared in 1904 that 'Tatts Club without the bookmakers would not last a month,' owing to its reliance upon their activities and financial contribution.¹⁶⁷ While the number of bookmaking members had reached almost 100 in 1950, there were only twenty-five remaining in 1983. Although they retained a conspicuous presence – most were well-known, long-term members of the Club who still carried bags bearing their names – the change was further amplified by the total membership practically doubling to 4,000 during the same period.¹⁶⁸ This decline was reflected throughout the profession in Brisbane. While nearly 300 bookmakers attended the race meetings at Eagle Farm during the 1950s, there were less than sixty-five present in the 1980s.¹⁶⁹ Amid the growing inactivity, bookmakers left the Flat enclosure in 1968, while the

¹⁶⁵ *Sunday Mail Magazine*, 7 July 1991, 5.

¹⁶⁶ Thomis, *Brisbane Club*, 2; Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, 234.

¹⁶⁷ *Truth*, 17 April 1904, 7.

¹⁶⁸ TCAR 1983.

¹⁶⁹ Tattersall's Bookies, 2006; Coughlan, *QTC*, 179.

St Leger was later closed in November 1985.¹⁷⁰ Tattersall's bookmakers still represented one-third of those fielding at Eagle Farm in the 1980s, and included some of the most prominent names in the industry such as Brian Ogilvie and Merv Cooper, but a downward trend was clear.¹⁷¹ Financially, while three-fourths of the Club's revenue had been derived 'from the bookies' back in 1904, their subscription accounted for just 0.4% of an income in 1983 that was far more reliant upon the membership fees of ordinary members.¹⁷²

The bookmakers' declining influence within Tattersall's was notable in other ways. In the 1930s, for example, the Club had unanimously awarded life membership to two long-term bookmakers, Sylvester O'Connor and William Danaher, who had joined the Club in 1892 and 1900 respectively (Danaher served as a bookmaking representative on the Tattersall's Committee for twenty-five years until his death in 1939).¹⁷³ No bookmaking member had, however, received such an honour since. Furthermore, in 1969 Tattersall's revised its Rules so that just one bookmaking representative was needed on the Committee, ending a sixty-five-year period where two had been required in reflection of the strong bookmaking identity of the Club. In addition, whereas an air of exclusivity once existed among the Tattersall's bookmakers – who, from at least the 1940s, had to hold a Paddock Licence to join the Club – they only required a licence that was deemed 'acceptable by the Committee' from 1986.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, bookmakers' entrance and subscription charges were also brought into line with ordinary membership fees in the 1980s, when previously they had always paid more. In 1966, for example, they had been paying \$500 entrance and \$31.50 subscription, compared to \$63 and \$12.60 for ordinary members.¹⁷⁵ The removal of such restrictive measures demonstrated that the Club was aware of its diminishing bookmaking influence, as such policies were obviously becoming redundant.

The reduction in bookmakers throughout the Club, Brisbane and the wider state could of course be partly attributed to the introduction of the TAB in 1962. Certainly, it exacerbated falling race day attendances as, for many, the need to bet on-course with a bookmaker was

¹⁷⁰ Coughlan, *QTC*, 179.

¹⁷¹ *Courier-Mail*, 15 October 1983, 29; Coughlan, *QTC*, 179.

¹⁷² *Truth*, 17 April 1904, 7; TCAR 1983. Subscription fees from bookmaking members accounted for \$2,500 out of a total revenue of over \$640,000 in 1983.

¹⁷³ *Daily Mercury* (Mackay, QLD), 27 October 1939, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Danaher, 2015; TCAR 1986.

¹⁷⁵ TCAR 1965.

removed. While the TRC's four race meetings in the 1967/68 season attracted a total of 54,550 attendees, this figure had dropped to 43,100 by 1973/74, and by 1980/81 it had fallen further to 36,650.¹⁷⁶ For a Club that boasted over 20,000 attendees at its Tattersall's Cup meeting alone in 1951 – a record that was almost surpassed ten years later at the same event – this was a sizeable decrease. Of course, factors other than the TAB kept people away from the racecourse. SP betting – which the Club had done little to prevent within its own Arcade during the 1930s – remained prevalent in society, and was even a key element of the \$100-million-a-year 'Rat Pack' police-franchised illegal industry exposed in 1986-87.¹⁷⁷ The subsequent *Fitzgerald Inquiry* estimated that SP betting had taken \$200 million away from the TAB's revenue since 1962, so both legal and illegal off-course activities had harmed race-day attendances.¹⁷⁸ The growing popularity of other sports and attractions also had an impact. The TRC itself pointed to interdominion trotting and the introduction of night greyhound racing during the 1971/72 season as a factor in its falling crowds. Additionally, a low attendance in December 1977 was attributed to the Australia versus India Test match at the Brisbane Cricket Ground (the Gabba), while a decrease in June 1980 was blamed on a clash with Australia's rugby union encounter against New Zealand at Ballymore.¹⁷⁹

Ultimately, with less people attending the races, and less bookmakers fielding, the effect on Tattersall's Club was understandable. There was less settling to be done, and fewer bets to arbitrate upon as the century progressed. Bookmaking itself had also become highly sophisticated by the 1980s – the count was progressive, and banking and settling could be completed on the course on the Saturday. With its decline in bookmakers, the Club mirrored changes occurring in the industry throughout the state, but in the process a significant part of its identity had receded. In addition, it should not be forgotten that while the formation of the TRC had been a show of commitment to the industry – and a success in its own right – it was also an enforced separation between the main Club and its racing identity. The two were no longer synonymous, and both existing and future members could choose to actively dissociate themselves from a historical component of Tattersall's Club.

¹⁷⁶ TRCAR 1967/68, 1973/74 and 1980/81.

¹⁷⁷ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 243.

¹⁷⁸ Cohen, "The TAB in Queensland," 59. The full title of the *Fitzgerald Inquiry* was: Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct.

¹⁷⁹ TRCAR 1971/72, 1977/78 and 1979/80.



Fig. 8. Bookmakers enjoying busier days at a race meeting at Albion Park in 1932. W. H. Tudor (front-centre) was a prominent bookmaker in Brisbane who was, as his bag illustrates, registered with Tattersall's Club. (Photo: SLQ).

2) Changing Premises

This chapter charts the array of sites that housed the Club during its formative years before detailing its eventual move to permanent premises in 1926. It reveals that Tattersall's consistently strove for progress, with each passing decade generally reflecting an improved position, as the Club's requirements became more extensive while its membership continued to grow. The moves also reflected the gradual changes within the Club's identity, as features of the traditional gentlemen's club emerged alongside growing social provisions. The new custom-built clubhouse in 1926 clearly sought the very best for Tattersall's and its membership, while a strong, ambitious leadership that held the utmost confidence in the future of the Club was also evident. By exploring the site's development and subsequent additions – most notably the magnificent Dining Hall in 1939 – it is possible to see the relationship between the Club and some of Brisbane's most significant architecture of the age. The chapter tells part of Tattersall's story in the twentieth century, as it developed the physical infrastructure to facilitate its evolving character, while the theme of change and continuity is represented within the Club's phases of advancement and consolidation.

i) The early homes of Tattersall's Club

Having successfully formed in November 1883, the first home of Tattersall's Club was the Australian Hotel on the corner of Albert and Queen Streets, which included a Tattersall's Room to accommodate its fifty-nine members by the end of that year. Renovations were soon carried out by proprietor Fred Jordan and ensured that the building could be 'relied upon to give every satisfaction and comfort to those who patronise it.'¹ At the Annual Meeting in November 1886, however, it was declared that more extensive premises were required for a membership that had risen to 251. The Club wanted space for the exclusive use of its members, while Secretary Haygarth also specified the need for offices to accommodate himself and the Committee, as well as an area to house the Club's 'library of sporting files.'² One year later, permanent rooms were secured within the 'palatial new buildings' on the corner of Albert and Adelaide Streets. 'Kent's Buildings' had been erected by William Kent, who had presided over the first Tattersall's formed in Brisbane in 1865. A celebratory private opening of the rooms took place on 13 December 1887, which was ably

¹ *Queensland Figaro*, 5 December 1885, 6.

² *Week*, 6 November 1886, 22.

assisted by three cases of champagne.³ The well-furnished and ‘enchantingly comfortable’ quarters were reportedly the most spacious and best appointed in Brisbane.⁴ They would go on to serve the Club for thirteen years, a length of stay second only to its present home.

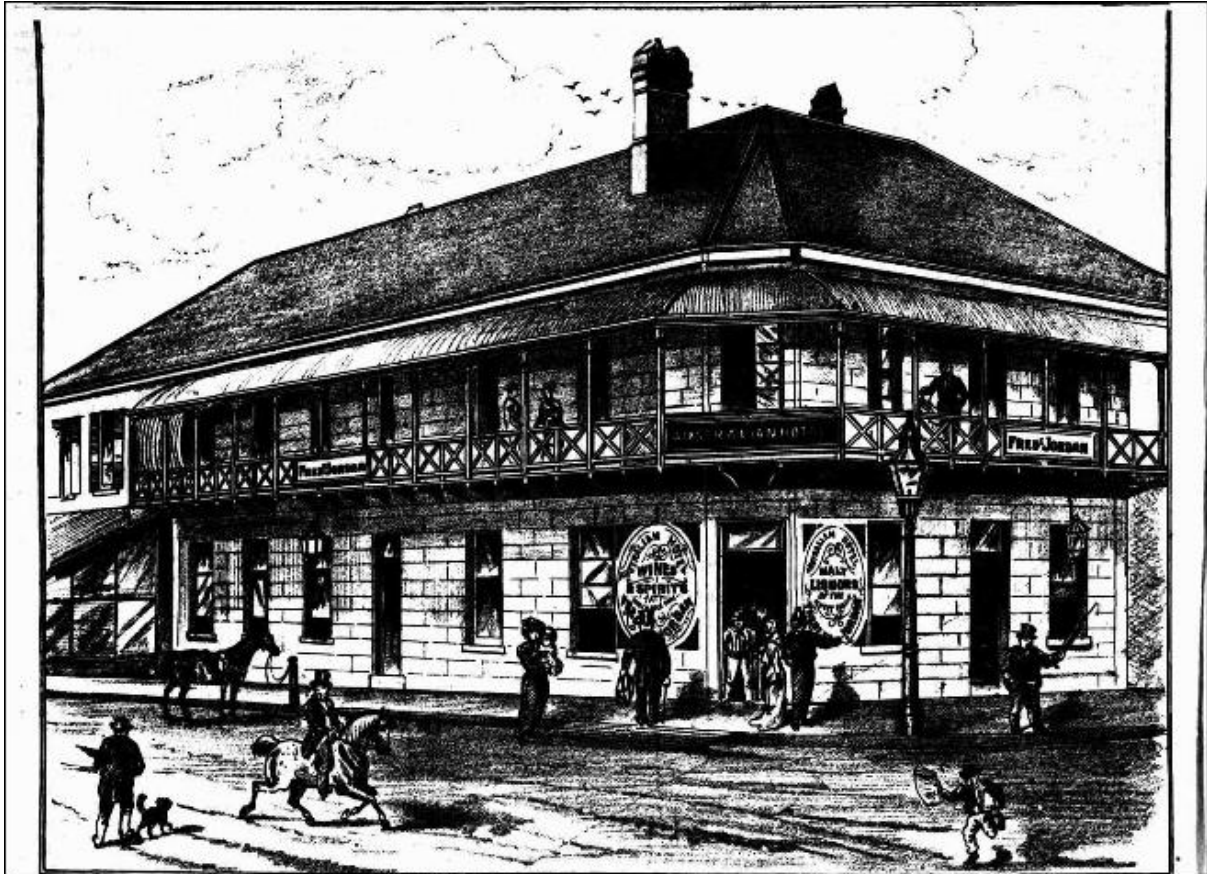


Fig. 9. Fred Jordan's Australian Hotel on the corner of Albert and Queen Streets. Known as 'The Corner,' it was the first home of the revived Tattersall's Club for four years between November 1883 and December 1887. (Photo: Queensland Figaro, 7 October 1885).

At the Annual Meeting in February 1901, discussions took place concerning the absence of bookmakers settling within the clubrooms. The popularity of Tattersall's had suffered as a result, and this encouraged the Club to find a more central location.⁵ By May, Tattersall's had relocated to the ground floor of 227 Queen Street opposite the General Post Office – then the heart of Brisbane's main thoroughfare. The Committee soon reported that the change had been 'very advantageous,' with the additional space filled by a membership of

³ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 67.

⁴ *Queensland Figaro*, 31 March 1888, 3.

⁵ *Telegraph*, 9 February 1901, 15.

470.⁶ During the depression of the previous decade, numbers had dropped to below fifty, so the Club's position at the beginning of the twentieth century was much improved. By 1906, however, the Committee sought a 'departure from the system of paying an unreasonably high rental' of £413-a-year.⁷ Appeals to the landlords for increased space at a lower rate were unsuccessful, and Committeeman T. Wilson lamented that 'after paying away over £2,000 in rent, they had nothing to show for it.'⁸



Fig. 10. This flashlight photo, taken in 1903, shows some of the members assembled at the Club's home on 227 Queen Street. Tattersall's leased these premises from the Queensland Investment Company for five years between May 1901 and May 1906. (Photo: Tattersall's Club archives).

It became clear that the Committee wanted to secure property ownership. Vice President George Morrison reported that, having inspected several properties, Aachen Chambers on Edward Street was the most appropriate on offer. A £5,000 deal was agreed with the building's owners – the Commonwealth Bank – which involved a down-payment of £100

⁶ TCAR 1902.

⁷ *Truth*, 28 January 1906, 8.

⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1906, 7.

and an annual fee of £200 to be paid between 1909 and 1916, while a £3,500 annual mortgage was to remain at a rate of 4.5%.⁹ In the opinion of many experts, the property was acquired at ‘bedrock’ price, and would be worth much more ‘if Brisbane went ahead as many believed it would’ in the years to come.¹⁰ The opening of the ‘splendid new premises’ took place on 17 May 1906, with President Edward Forrest commending both architect (H. Thomas) and contractor (F. A. Groth) in front of a packed central hall. The ground floor included a large clubroom, secretary’s office and bar, while the upper floor featured a card and billiard room. With such spacious new premises, Tattersall’s was now in a position to welcome new members. Forrest also ‘hoped the Club had made its last move,’ which was testament to the long-term vision for the new home.¹¹

At the Annual Meeting in January 1909, however, members sanctioned the Committee’s plan to sell the site for £6,250. Although there were ‘no serious set of circumstances’ facing the Club at the time, the Committee had ‘considered dangers ahead.’¹² Tattersall’s had made a loss of over £300 in 1908, and it is likely that the impending repayments on the property were causing concern. The Committee believed it inadvisable to take out a second mortgage and so necessitated a sale that placed Tattersall’s in a comfortable financial position, while it also afforded the Club a period of nine months to organise alternative accommodation.¹³ After negotiations to move into Colonial Mutual Chambers at 62 Queen Street failed, Tattersall’s instead took a five-year lease of rooms above stockbrokers Currie, Buchanan & Co. at 301 Queen Street in August 1909. Details of the rooms are scarce, but it appeared that the Club soon wearied of their limitations. At the 1914 Annual Meeting, Vice President James Blair noted that although ‘Tattersall’s had good premises, they should have the best.’¹⁴ It was also deemed unacceptable that the accommodation became so sorely taxed when the Club was at its busiest on race days and during settling.¹⁵

In August 1914, Tattersall’s leased rooms at the Isles Love building on Adelaide Street for £350-a-year. Confidently referred to ‘as the best clubrooms in the city’ in the 1915 Annual

⁹ TCM 1906.

¹⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1906, 7.

¹¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 18 May 1906, 5.

¹² *Queenslander*, 30 January 1909, 18.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Daily Standard*, 19 January 1914, 5.

¹⁵ *Truth*, 18 January 1914, 3.

Report, the new rooms were more commodious and helped to attract further members.¹⁶ There had been 379 members in August 1914, but by the beginning of 1917 the number had risen to 800.¹⁷ With a healthy profit of over £2,000 recorded that same year, Blair – now president – could assuredly state that Tattersall’s had never been ‘stronger financially or numerically than at present,’ while the full attendance of the rooms in the evenings justified the Committee’s claim that Tattersall’s was ‘the most popular club throughout the state.’¹⁸ Within a year, some members were calling for the Club to purchase property of its own – many believed that Aachen Chambers should never have been disposed of – and Blair conceded that Tattersall’s needed to extend its premises at the beginning of 1919.¹⁹ Nothing materialised, however, and in June 1921 the Committee concluded that the Isles Love site, which the Club already occupied, was most suitable for purchase. The building was obtained for £13,000 and, in a sign of the Club’s growing financial strength, £10,000 was paid outright.²⁰ Any long-term plans for the structure were abandoned, however, when it was sold for £15,000 in November 1923. Tattersall’s had instead secured a site on Edward Street upon which to erect the magnificent Club building that still stands today.²¹

ii) Finalising the move

Tattersall’s entered 1923 with assets amounting to £25,000, which were made up of its land and premises at Adelaide Street, fixed deposits at the bank, and War Bonds totalling £6,500.²² The Club had also been consistently prosperous with an average annual profit of £3,150 between 1918 and 1923. It was therefore possible to secure the Edward Street property at a cost of £25,740 in June 1923.²³ Known as ‘The Arcade’ under previous owner Mick Simmons, the building was situated directly opposite Aachen Chambers. Upon selling the Adelaide Street premises for a profit of £1,625, the Committee sought to raise additional funds by increasing membership fees at a Special Meeting on 22 October 1923. The proposal would see entrance fees rise from two guineas to three (£2.2s. to £3.3s.),

¹⁶ TCAR 1915.

¹⁷ *Telegraph*, 30 January 1917, 5.

¹⁸ *Daily Mail* (Brisbane), 30 January 1917, 3.

¹⁹ *Telegraph*, 30 January 1919, 3.

²⁰ TCAR 1921.

²¹ TCAR 1923.

²² TCAR 1922.

²³ TCAR 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922 and 1923.

while annual subscription would also increase from one guinea to two (£1.1s. to £2.2s.). President Dr Patrick Crowe believed 'that members in their goodness will not for a moment hesitate to come forward to make the Club one of the leading sporting clubs in Australia,' and their approval was subsequently obtained.²⁴ As Crowe's successor, Pat Ranson, proudly declared at the Annual Meeting in January 1924, Tattersall's now possessed a site that 'was more central as far as the Club's business was concerned,' and consequently 'much superior to the one originally intended.' It covered a greater area, with a 75 feet frontage to Edward Street and a depth of 138 feet. The Committee wanted 'the comfort of members to be the first consideration,' and intended to erect a modern two-storeyed premises.²⁵ 'We are not going to 'spoil the ship for ha'porth of Tar,' assured Ranson, 'but propose making the Club what it should be – the most up-to-date and most comfortable in the Commonwealth.'²⁶

The new site included an arcade that was to be retained, though rebuilt, but as several leases did not expire until February 1925, it would be another year before Tattersall's could begin work on its new home. In the interim, the Club took a lease on the Adelaide Street property it had recently sold (the former Isles Love building). It also secured a passageway of 6 feet by 64 feet through to Queen Street that would provide a second entrance to the new club and arcade. This was conveniently opposite Finney Isles & Co., then Brisbane's leading retail emporium, which encouraged Ranson's belief that there would be 'no difficulty in letting the shops at a satisfactory rent.' This revenue was anticipated as an important source of income, and it was hoped that it would 'pretty well pay the interest on the money we have to borrow towards erecting the building.'²⁷ It is likely that Tattersall's took some inspiration from the Brisbane Club – which was located next door to Isles Love – as it had been receiving a monthly income of £130 from its seven retail tenants by 1918.²⁸

In December 1924, Queensland National Bank advanced the Club with £35,000 to help fund the project. £3,000 was to be paid on the principal each year, while interest would be charged at the current rate (7%). The overdraft was accepted, and with support from fixed deposits of £8,000, rental income amounting to an initial £1,500 per year, and a then record

²⁴ TCM 1923.

²⁵ TCM 1924.

²⁶ TCAR 1923.

²⁷ TCAR 1924.

²⁸ Thomis, *Brisbane Club*, 9-12.

annual profit of £5,100, the Club was able to commence operations in the new year. The Committee accepted a tender of £39,000 from contractors J. I. Green and Sons, who would carry out the approved plans of Thomas Hall and George Prentice.²⁹

Brisbane experienced a building boom in the 1920s, and the new Tattersall's building was expected to be 'a valued addition to the architectural features of the city.'³⁰ Brisbane's 250,000 inhabitants witnessed the emergence of central towers like the T&G Building (1923) and Ascot Chambers (1925), while new theatres also opened along Queen Street such as the Winter Garden (1924) and the Regent (1929). Hall and Prentice were the city's leading architects – both were also Tattersall's members – and would become best known for designing Brisbane City Hall (completed in 1930). On a trip to the United States in 1922, Hall took inspiration from the club buildings of New York architects William Adams Delano and Chester Holmes Aldrich, whose recent work included the city's Knickerbocker, Colony and Union clubs. Hall and Prentice were themselves masters of Brisbane's climatic conditions, and their devised neoclassical architecture of stone and marble afforded cool and spacious interiors which were particularly welcome in the age before air-conditioning.³¹



Fig. 11. Brisbane's leading architects in the 1920s, George Prentice (far-left) and Thomas Hall, who designed the Tattersall's Club building. Hall later served as Club President between 1928 and 1932. (Photo: Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Souvenir and Retrospect, 1926).

²⁹ TCM 1924.

³⁰ *Daily Mail*, 19 July 1924, 14.

³¹ Alice Hampson, "Tattersall's Club Dining Room," in *Brisbane Art Deco: Stories of our Built Heritage*, ed. Kimberley J. Wilson (Brisbane: Jubilee Studios, 2015), 140.

Hall and Prentice's final plan for Tattersall's differed from contemporary club structures in Australia, such as the seven-storeyed premises recently acquired by the City Tattersall's Club in Sydney.³² Hall had initially provided a sketch of a six-storied building that the Committee did not favour, owing much to Ranson's belief in 'the advantage of having your entire club on the one floor' to maximise the comfort of members. Ranson also wanted the Club Room to be 'under the Secretary's eye' to try and encourage a higher standard of behaviour, especially after the landlords at Isles Love had complained of the 'singing of songs and noise by apparently drunken members' in October 1923.³³ In preparation for the move, the Committee clamped down on any transgressions reported by Secretary Robert Gillespie. These ranged from the use of obscene language to an attempted assault of one of the stewards, and offending members were given final warnings alongside hefty fines throughout 1924.³⁴ The Committee's intolerance increased the following year, when T. Huxley and P. Corbett – who, incidentally, were brothers-in-law – were asked to resign from the Club following a drunken argument that 'annoyed members generally' in April 1925. A final appeal for improvement was made at the Annual Meeting in 1926, where one member quite reasonably complained about the 'abominable' habit of members spitting on the floors and walls.³⁵ Given the superior facilities and sense of opulence that awaited within the new building, such a drive to enhance the behaviour of members was understandable.

iii) A new home

Building commenced in early March 1925 and was completed in just over a year, with the Club taking full possession of its new premises on 28 July 1926. The Edward Street façade was designed in the classical revival style, and its materials and detail were associated with the neighbouring Ascot Chambers (also the work of Hall and Prentice). The *Queensland Heritage Register* noted that its 'central three bays on the upper two levels have flanking giant order pilasters, with double pilasters, at each end,' while 'the two outer sections have arched openings on the top level and a cantilevered balcony with cast iron railings.'³⁶

³² *Daily Mail*, 14 February 1923, 7.

³³ TCM 1923 and 1924.

³⁴ TCM 1924.

³⁵ TCM 1925 and 1926.

³⁶ 'Tattersall's Club,' *Queensland Heritage Register*, accessed 3 July 2017, <https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600093>.

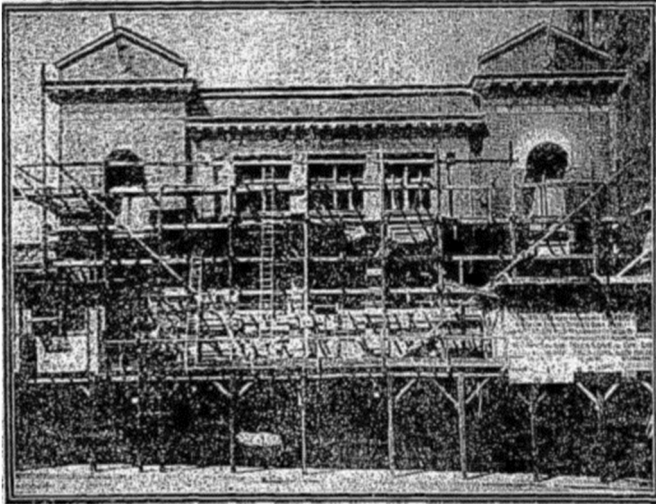


Fig. 12. (left) Construction nears completion in late 1925; and (below) the new Tattersall's Club on Edward Street, photographed upon its opening in 1926. (Photos: Brisbane-Courier, 29 December 1925; Tattersall's Club Retrospect).



The ground floor contained the neoclassic Arcade, which included ten shops with an additional four facing Edward Street. The Edward Street walkthrough featured terrazzo flooring and an ornamental fibro-plaster ceiling, supplemented by silky oak woodwork with a walnut finish. The Queen Street entrance had a marble floor surface and a heavily-vaulted ceiling, with bas-relief panels adorning the sides. The frieze, which depicted the evolution of the horse in sport, was modelled by prominent Queensland sculptor Daphne Mayo, who also carved the Brisbane City Hall tympanum in 1927.³⁷ It was an impressive arcade for its day – ‘modelled on the best of the south’ – with leases expected to return an annual profit of £3,500, a potentially invaluable source of long-term income.³⁸

³⁷ *Daily Mail*, 28 July 1926, 15

³⁸ *Daily Mail*, 6 July 1926, 16; *Telegraph*, 28 July 1926, 11.



Fig. 13. The Edward Street (left) and Queen Street (right) entrances to the Tattersall's Arcade, c.1950. (Photo: Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Anniversary Celebration, 1951).



Fig. 14. Daphne Mayo's frieze, 'The Horse in Sport.' From right to left, it begins with a horse and rider – taken from a Parthenon frieze of c.400 B.C. – then features a Roman charioteer, a group of English medieval jousters, an English hunter, a polo player, a mounted soldier, a jockey (riding 'Tod Sloan' style) and a trotter, before finishing with the champion Australian thoroughbreds of 1925 – Valicare and the Melbourne Cup Winner Windbag. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1993).

The first floor housed the main Club Room, which was undoubtedly the focal-point of the new building. Admiration within the press was unanimous: The *Daily Mail* wrote that the 'handsomely executed' Club Room was 'something of a revelation in artistic and compact design...which those competent to judge proclaim to be the best of its kind in Australia'; the *Brisbane Courier* suggested that it had 'no rival in Australia for size or embellishment,'

measuring 132 feet long, 75 feet wide and just over 40 feet high.³⁹ The room was aptly described as hall-like, and its vast scale was achieved by strategically creating a 'double-height vaulted space spanning the entire depth and footprint from Edward Street.'⁴⁰ Such a large open area also enabled it to function as a Settling Room on Mondays. Twelve settling tables were designed with built-in money drawers and were accompanied by numerous smaller service tables with electronically-fitted bells.⁴¹ Japanese lacquered silky-oak chairs were also installed, along with polished brass spittoons and wooden stands with copper bins. The latter were a gift from Castlemaine Perkins, the Brisbane-based brewery that had recently launched its now customary 'Fourex' (XXXX) ale.⁴² The Club Room floor was covered with 500-yards of Dunlop inlaid rubber matting that carried a minimum guarantee of twenty-five years, while any remaining space used silver grain parquetry.⁴³



Fig. 15. The Club Room and gallery at the new Edward Street Premises, 1926. The bar can be seen on the lower right. The windows at the far (northern) end faced Edward Street. (Photo: SLQ).

³⁹ *Daily Mail*, 28 July 1926, 15; *Brisbane Courier*, 26 July 1926, 28.

⁴⁰ *Telegraph*, 28 July 1926, 11; Hampson, "Tattersall's Club Dining Room," 139.

⁴¹ *Tattersall's Club Retrospect*, 43.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴³ *Daily Mail*, 28 July 1926, 15; *Brisbane Courier*, 6 March 1925, 14.

An 82 feet marble bar flanked one side of the room. The bar was faced with what was, according to Hall and Prentice, 'the finest example of panelling in Cudgegong marble ever accomplished in Queensland.'⁴⁴ Behind it was a motorised brine-pumping system that supported ice-chests – a type of refrigeration that was 'the first of its kind in Brisbane.'⁴⁵ A service lift was also installed at one end to bring stock up from the storage basement, while the back wall featured another production of Mayo's decorative plaster frieze.



Fig. 16. The 82 feet bar inside the Club Room at the new Edward Street Premises, 1926. Mayo's frieze can just about be seen above the windows. (Photo: Tattersall's Club Magazine, June 1930).

At the northern end of the Club Room was reportedly the 'most up-to-date billiard room in Queensland.'⁴⁶ Separated by a semi-circular barrier, the luxurious parlour featured panelled walls and a curved platform with seating that could accommodate up to 100 spectators. The seating was carefully designed to allow entrance from the back only, which would help to

⁴⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 July 1926, 8.

⁴⁵ *Daily Mail*, 28 July 1926, 15.

⁴⁶ *Telegraph*, 28 July 1926, 11.

prevent any interruption of play by spectators.⁴⁷ The exhibition table was positioned in the centre and was one of three new Heiron and Smith tables acquired by Tattersall's. Conveniently, the company's showroom – Home Recreations – was one of the Club's leases on Edward Street (see *Fig. 12*).⁴⁸ At the southern end of the Club Room, a stage was built into the wall measuring 13 feet by 6 feet.⁴⁹ This enabled the room to be converted into an impromptu concert hall, and provided a platform for the chairing of Club meetings or the reading of the race card. The Club Room also included two stairways of stained maple either side of the billiard parlour that connected the main floor with the mezzanine level above.⁵⁰



Fig. 17. The new Billiard Room with its semi-circular barrier and restricted entrance, 1926. (Photo: SLQ).

⁴⁷ *Tattersall's Club Retrospect*, 43.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 6 March 1926, 14.

⁵⁰ *Tattersall's Club Retrospect*, 43.

The mezzanine extended all around the Club Room and, with its enclosed balustrade, was designed to provide ‘an excellent observation gallery’ of the entire area.⁵¹ On the east wing were six recreation rooms, primarily to be used for card games, while the west wing included the Committee Room, President’s Room, Secretary’s Office and Visitors’ Waiting Room. A reading lounge occupied the north balcony facing Edward Street, which led through to the well-equipped Writing Room on the east side. The mezzanine and its rooms were adorned with £6,000 of rich maple furnishings, while the rooms were all expertly arranged.⁵² The Writing Room, for example, was replete with glass covered tables and a well-stocked library; the recreation rooms included the very best Pullman card units; while the Committee Room contained a master-clock that synchronised all twenty clocks in the building.⁵³ The latter also featured the luxurious Committee Table and several chairs personally donated by H. R. Gale, including the President’s Chair in leather upholstered maple. The new Club was reportedly only fitted with brand new furniture throughout, which was mostly provided by John Hicks & Co. (of whom Gale was Managing Director).⁵⁴



Fig. 18. The President’s Chair, with an inscription that reads: ‘Presented to R. P. Ranson Esq. By H. R. Gale, July 1926.’ (Photo: Dr Michael O’Shea, 2014).

⁵¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 6 March 1925, 14.

⁵² *Brisbane Courier*, 26 July 1926, 8.

⁵³ *Tattersall’s Club Retrospect*, 43.

⁵⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1927, 5.

Overlooking the entire Club Room was the magnificent high ceiling. Crafted on fibrous plaster on timber frame trusses, and measuring 11.7 metres exactly, the intricate and ornate ceiling was unusual within Brisbane (though the Regent Theatre featured a similarly decorative upper interior).⁵⁵ It was designed in 'neoclassic style, ventilated by a clear storey and perforated with lattice treatment and six central miniature domes, from each of which is suspended a decorative plaster pendant.'⁵⁶ All ornamental plaster and panelling work was completed by W. White and Son, which included Mayo's friezes.⁵⁷ Beneath the moulded cornices at the southern end of the room was a bust of Ranson (also created by Mayo), who had been an instrumental force behind the move, while sculptures of fifteen lions' heads could also be found surrounding the upper walls. The south wall also featured a Royal Coat of Arms, which acted as 'an expression of the loyalty of members to King and country.'⁵⁸



Fig. 19. The Club Room from the north balcony. The stage is at the southern end, and on the wall above is the Royal Coat of Arms. Part of Ranson's bust can be seen further up (obscured by the hanging light). The rooms on the left above the bar were mainly used for card games. (Photo: SLQ).

⁵⁵ *Daily Mail*, 28 July 1926, 15.

⁵⁶ *Tattersall's Club Retrospect*, 43.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁸ *Tattersall's Club Retrospect*, 47.

From the modern lavatories, where ‘members could find practically every known aid to cleanliness and comfort,’ to the shoe-shining parlour and massage room, the facilities far exceeded what the Club had offered previously.⁵⁹ There were also unique qualities to the new clubhouse. It catered for a range of needs and interests among members who could drink, socialise, read, relax, play cards and shoot billiards – all typical club activities – but there were also concessions to a racing tradition and identity that was still present. These included smaller amenities, such as the bathroom lockers installed so that members could store clothes and ‘have a change when they come from the races.’⁶⁰ More noticeable were the provisions in place for Settling Day that helped to ensure the practice remained a key feature of Tattersall’s for many years to come. Perhaps most striking of all, however, was the fact that the main Club Room and gallery was modelled on the 1776 repository at the original Tattersall’s horse auction mart in Hyde Park.⁶¹ This also partly inspired the immense scale on which the Club Room was conceived. Indeed, the premises originally drew more comparisons with Federal Parliament House in Canberra than other clubs. The Club Room at the Queensland Club, for example, measured a comparatively modest 60 feet by 20 feet.⁶²

Ranson was justifiably proud at the opening of the new premises, which was attended by over 500 members: ‘Today marks a memorable epoch in the history of the Club, for we enter possession of a new home which, it can be justly claimed, is superior to any of its kind in the Commonwealth.’⁶³ In addition, few other clubs could offer such facilities at the comparatively cheap annual subscription of £2.2s.⁶⁴ Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the subscription fees for both the Brisbane Club (£5.5s) and the Queensland Club (£12) far exceeded this.⁶⁵ Ranson also took pride in stating that, aside from the marble which faced the bar (which was from NSW), all other materials used in the construction were from Queensland, while the project had also employed Queensland labour only.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ *Daily Mail*, 28 July 1926, 15; *Telegraph*, 28 July 1926, 11.

⁶⁰ TCM 1924.

⁶¹ ‘Tattersall’s Club,’ *Queensland Heritage Register*.

⁶² *Telegraph*, 29 July 1926, 14; Bell, *Queensland Club*, 29.

⁶³ *Tattersall’s Club Retrospect*, 3.

⁶⁴ *Telegraph*, 29 July 1926, 14.

⁶⁵ Thomis, *Brisbane Club*, 3; Bell, *Queensland Club*, 8.

⁶⁶ *Tattersall’s Club Retrospect*, 45.

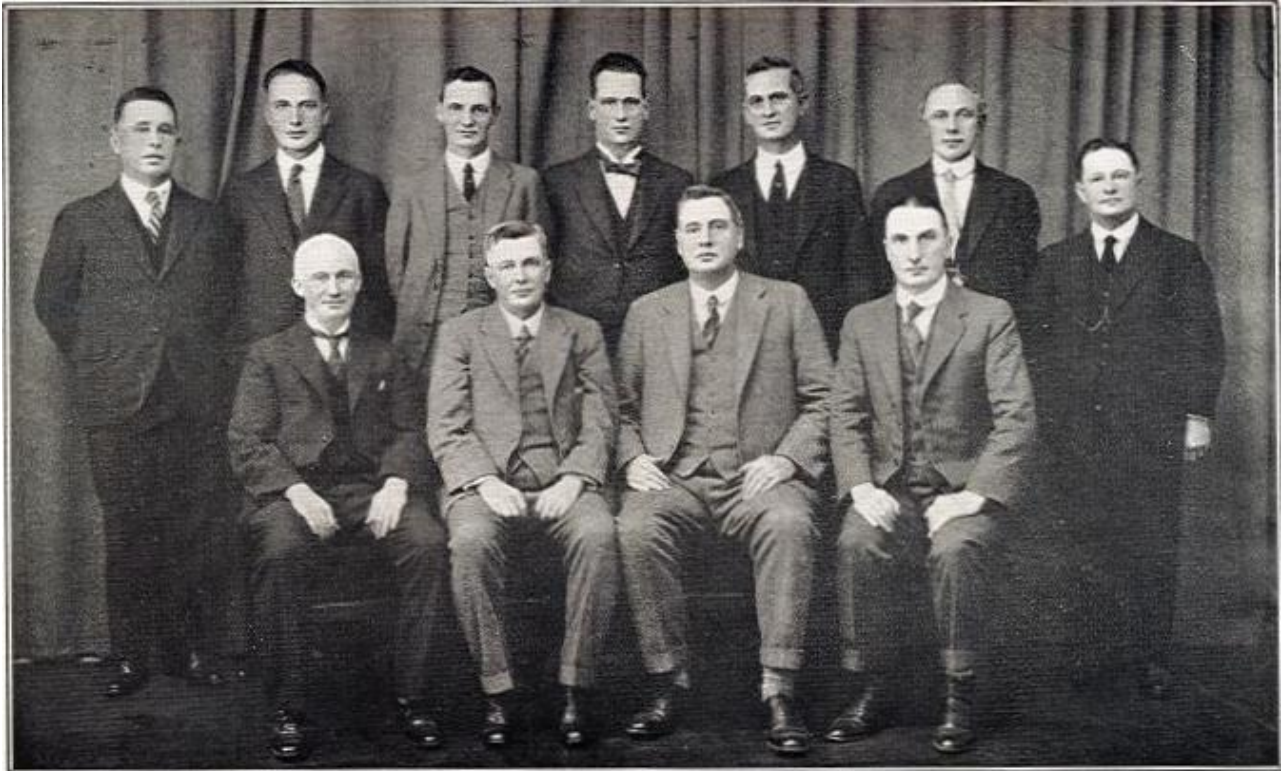


Fig. 20. The Committee at the time of the opening of the new premises in 1926. From left to right: (back row) W. Danaher, W. McDonald, J. East, J. J. Grayson, T. J. Connelly, J. Jack, R. A. Noonan; (front row) R. Gillespie (Secretary), W. H. Buchanan (Treasurer), R. P. Ranson (President), W. J. Healy (Vice-President). (Photo: Tattersall's Club Retrospect).

While an exciting future awaited, it was also a time for reflection, and the president paid tribute to the 'pioneer sportsmen' of 1883 who had laid the foundations of the Club. In the years since that meeting of twenty-three racing enthusiasts within a hotel room, Tattersall's had progressed from a 'Bohemian sporting club' to a well-established institution in possession of its own custom-built premises for over 1,000 members.⁶⁷ The variety of careers among the membership also demonstrated how far the Club had come. Among the 948 listed in the 1924 membership roll, there were: 142 graziers, 94 clerks, 65 bookmakers, 54 licenced victuallers, 39 travellers, 31 trainers, 30 produce merchants, 21 department managers, 16 accountants, 15 salesmen, 15 dentists, 15 auctioneers, 13 solicitors, 13 motor proprietors, 11 contractors, 11 engineers, 11 butchers, 9 journalists, 9 storekeepers, 8 medical practitioners, 7 chemists, 6 architects, 6 tailors and 4 barristers.⁶⁸ This was a broader range than most clubs: graziers made up 40% of the membership of the

⁶⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 29 July 1926, 16.

⁶⁸ Tattersall's Club Members' Register 1917-1924.

Queensland Club, for example, between 1859 and 1959.⁶⁹ Naturally, the centrality of the Club's new premises was ideal for a growing membership body of diverse professions.

The new premises also tied Tattersall's closer to the concept of the traditional gentlemen's club. While growing its numbers and reserves across the six moves since its formation, the Club had eventually escaped leaseholds and attained property ownership. With the site on Edward Street it had achieved something even greater in building its own clubhouse. Club building had been one of the great metropolitan projects in nineteenth century England as the emerging gentlemen's clubs vied to surpass one another. In the late 1830s, for example, the Reform Club instructed architect Sir Charles Barry to build them a clubhouse in Pall Mall more splendid than any other in existence (Barry had previously built the Travellers' Club in 1829, also located in the heart of clubland, and went on to design the new Houses of Parliament in the mid-nineteenth century).⁷⁰ In adopting such lavish appointments within premises that went far beyond utilitarian, Tattersall's had achieved a sense of the faux-domesticity of the 'home away from home' environment of the gentlemen's club.

The move also represented a real sense of permanence for Tattersall's. The Committee was confident enough in the Club's long-term future to commit to a substantial overdraft, while the reported outlay of nearly £80,000 – mostly made up of the initial land cost (£28,000), the new building (£41,000) and furnishings (£6,000) – was a clear sign of intent.⁷¹ While perhaps not on the scale of clubland – the decorations alone at the Devonshire, built in 1827, exceeded the entire cost of the Edward Street building and fittings – it was still a significant amount within early twentieth-century Brisbane. Certainly, the elaborate nature of the new premises, and their potential to cater for more members, suggested that Tattersall's was here to stay as one of Queensland's and Australia's premier clubs.

iv) The Dining Hall

Within ten years of the opening of its new premises, Tattersall's paid £18,500 to the McQuillan Estate for several shops adjoining the Arcade on Queen Street in April 1935.

⁶⁹ Bell, *Queensland Club*, 100-121. In the roll of members listed in Appendix IV, 836 out of 2,112 are listed as graziers.

⁷⁰ Black, *Victorian Clubland*, 11; "Barry, Sir Charles (1795–1860)," M. H. Port in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. David Cannadine, accessed 6 August 2017, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.uq.edu.au/view/article/1550>.

⁷¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 29 July 1926, 16; *Telegraph*, 10 May 1926, 2.

Though exact plans for the 42 feet frontage were unclear, one committeeman epitomised the Club's ambitious philosophy when he stated that 'a policy of rigorous advancement will be pursued.'⁷² At the Annual Meeting in 1936, it was confirmed that 'badly needed' extensions were to be built upon the expiration of the final shop lease in 1937, and would include a new dining room, kitchen and lounge.⁷³ It was not until May 1938, however, that the tender of contractor J. Hutchinson and Sons was accepted, with building costs expected to amount to £28,000.⁷⁴ Designs were again carried out by Hall, who had formed a new partnership with Lionel Phillips (Hall and Phillips). In providing a new frontage to Queen Street, while adjoining the rear of the existing premises on Edward Street, the entire Club would occupy an 'L-shape' inside the corner of the two prominent Brisbane streets. With £10,000 worth of furnishing, the total outlay on the extensions would exceed £55,000.⁷⁵

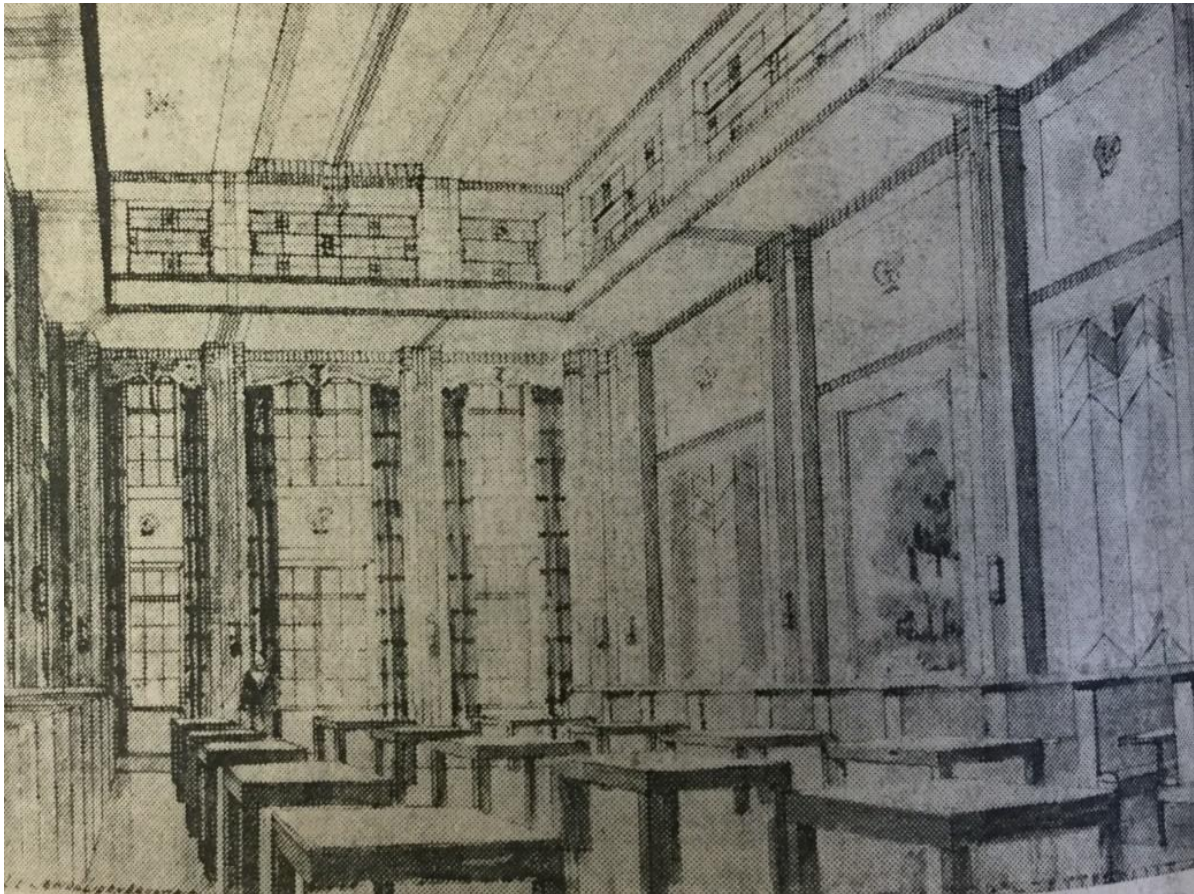


Fig. 21. An early sketch of the proposed new Dining Hall. (Photo: *Courier-Mail*, 17 May 1938).

⁷² *Courier-Mail*, 1 January 1936, 4.

⁷³ *Courier-Mail*, 31 January 1936, 10.

⁷⁴ *Telegraph*, 18 May 1938, 6.

⁷⁵ *Courier-Mail*, 27 June 1939, 4.

The most significant feature of the new building was its magnificent art deco Dining Hall. Able to cater for 150 people, it was built on a grand scale at approximately 35 feet high, 40 feet wide and 65 feet long. As with the Club Room, the entire land footprint was used to create the largest possible room volume.⁷⁶ Six large windows faced Queen Street with optional covering provided by lofty drapes, while an additional storey of windows at 30 feet surrounded the upper facings of the room (all the glass was joined by copper instead of the cheaper and more common lead). Visitors were impressed ‘with the warmth of natural light which bathes the interior of marble and rich timbers.’⁷⁷ Subtle artificial lighting was also provided from powerful fittings cast to the great ceiling to fill the hall with a soft glow. The lights were made from aluminium – a new and innovative material for lighting at the time – while the floor was covered wall-to-wall with rich Axminster carpet featuring a patterned arrangement of brown, cream and green.⁷⁸ The £600 carpet was made by Templeton & Co. of Scotland, who had also produced the blue coronation carpet at Westminster Abbey.⁷⁹



Fig. 22. One of the first photos taken of the Club's new art deco Dining Hall.
(Photo: *Truth*, 26 June 1939).

⁷⁶ Hampson, "Tattersall's Club Dining Room," 140.

⁷⁷ *Telegraph*, 26 June 1939, 18.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Hampson, "Tattersall's Club Dining Room," 143-4.

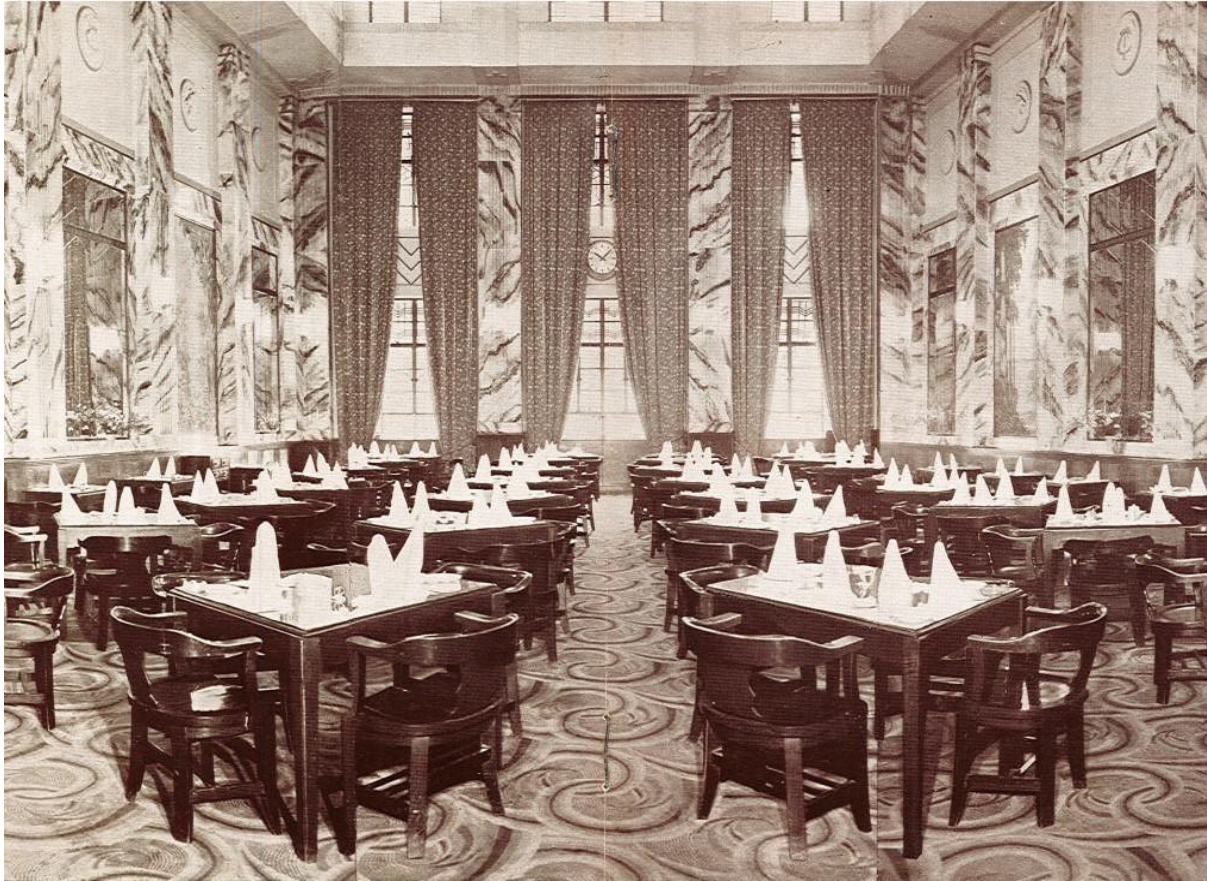


Fig. 23. The Dining Hall, c.1950. The room was set with four and two-seater tables and featured the familiar lacquered chairs also used in the Club Room. The patterned carpet and marble walls are particularly prominent. (Photo: Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Anniversary Celebration).

As with the Edward Street construction, the Dining Hall made extensive use of Queensland building materials. Marble sourced from Ulam, near Rockhampton, was used to create the stately columns and borders that adorned the scaling walls (an early instance of such marble being exploited decoratively); the wainscoting was made of maple and silky oak from the forests of northern Queensland; while the cement used was manufactured in nearby Darra.⁸⁰ Other decorative features included six colossal mirrors that reflected the room's architectural splendour, and numerous plaster panels that alternated between the Club's 'TC' monogram and equine heads in tribute to the sport 'so closely identified with Tattersall's.'⁸¹ Following a suggestion by the architects, the Committee also wrote to four Queensland artists requesting a series of mural paintings. Each measured 10 feet by 6 feet

⁸⁰ *Courier-Mail*, 27 June 1939, 4.

⁸¹ *Telegraph*, 26 June 1939, 18.

and depicted scenes of rural Queensland. Charles Henry Lancaster portrayed a timber scene, Melville Haysom showed fruit growing, Percy Stanhope Hobday presented the pastoral and agricultural industries, while William Bustard depicted mining. Referred to as ‘the best selection of mural paintings in Queensland,’ they reportedly imparted ‘a cheery out-of-door atmosphere of sunshine and spaciousness that must be appreciated by everyone who dines in their warmth.’⁸² At the official opening of the Hall on 4 August 1939, Bustard confirmed that he signed his artworks in the top corner – as opposed to the customary bottom right – to prevent the alterations to his surname that had inflicted some of his earlier pieces.⁸³



Fig. 24. Sections of each of the four mural paintings, from left to right: W. Bustard’s mining scene, M. Haysom’s fruit growing scene (which is admittedly difficult to decipher), P. S. Hobday’s pastoral and agricultural scene, and C. H. Lancaster’s timber scene. (Photo: Alex Lister, 2015).

⁸² *Courier-Mail*, 22 June 1939, 3.

⁸³ *Tattler*, Winter 2006. The Dining Hall was opened to members earlier on Monday 26 June 1939.

A mezzanine annexe above the entrance end of the Dining Hall provided additional dining space for forty patrons. It was expected to cater for female guests dining once a week – on Fridays between 6 and 8pm – with cosmetic and cloak rooms included in the extensions. A modern kitchen was also installed which stretched from just outside the Dining Hall's entrance to behind the south wall of the main Club Room.⁸⁴ While a cold-room had been included in the 1926 building, the counter lunch provisions had proven inadequate in the intervening years. As *The Telegraph* pointed out, 'the grand appointments of the hall would be wasted were they not supported by a most efficiently equipped kitchen.' It featured complete gas installation with grillers and steamers and three separate refrigeration units. Grey floor tiles, laid in embedded copper sheet, ensured the floor was impervious to water, while the walls were covered in stainless steel tiling to maximise cleanliness.⁸⁵

The extensions were fronted by a new Queen Street façade, which both added to the grand appearance of Tattersall's from the outside and increased the Club's prominence within the CBD. Also in the art deco style, it was faced with rich local benedict stone upon a concrete frame, and comprised of three bays separated by giant order pilasters.⁸⁶ The new building again received glowing admiration in the Queensland press. Headlines such as 'New Block is a Monument to Progress' and 'Dignity is Art Keynote' praised a dining room that was described as superior to any other in Australia, and 'one of which the Club and Brisbane itself may be justly proud.'⁸⁷ In addition, the new structure was a testament to the success of Tattersall's and the 'loyalty of its members,' while also 'a handsome addition in the community life of Brisbane.'⁸⁸ Within the Club, the addition of the Dining Hall was symbolic of a desire to continue its growth, and also represented an important shift in its use and identity. This was most obviously apparent in the development of Tattersall's as a luncheon institution for a growing number of professionals in Brisbane. A keen emphasis on dining, meanwhile, was of course another notable characteristic of the traditional gentlemen's club.

⁸⁴ *Courier-Mail*, 27 July 1939, 4.

⁸⁵ *Telegraph*, 26 June 1939, 18.

⁸⁶ 'Tattersall's Club,' *Queensland Heritage Register*.

⁸⁷ *Courier-Mail*, 27 July 1939, 4; *Telegraph*, 26 June 1939, 18.

⁸⁸ *Truth*, 2 July 1939, 29.



Fig. 25. The Queen Street façade to Tattersall's Club, c.1951. Built in 1939, the block housed the new Dining Hall. The building to the left belonged to President Bill Healy (1932-1953), who operated a menswear store out of the premises. Healy sold this property to Tattersall's in 1949 to facilitate further extensions.

(Photo: Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Anniversary Celebration).

v) Further additions to enduring premises

Further extensions to the premises were made possible in 1949, when President Bill Healy sold his Queen Street property to the Club (before leasing his store back). The Healy Building was positioned between the Dining Hall block and the Arcade walkway, and extended the Club's Queen Street frontage to 67½ feet. The purchase fee and associated building – which included a new library, visitors' lounge and secretary's office – totalled £35,350.⁸⁹ Although the acquisition was reportedly 'part of a long-term plan to meet expansion of the Club' – which now had 1,850 members and an established waiting list of over 100 – it would be the final addition to the premises until the redevelopment of Tattersall's in the 1990s.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ *Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Anniversary Celebration* (Brisbane: Jackson & Sullivan, 1951), 25.

⁹⁰ *Courier-Mail*, 1 February 1949, 3.

Some changes did take place within the premises during the intervening period. The iconic punkahs were installed above the bar in December 1945 and provided effective fanning over one of the busiest (and smokiest) areas of the Club, while instilling a touch of old-world charm.⁹¹ By the 1950s, electrical air-conditioning was a 'trade-asset' for business leaders across Brisbane, who placed orders worth hundreds of thousands of pounds.⁹² Some 81% of members voted in favour of installation at the Club, which took place in October 1955 at a cost of £33,000, and ensured that Tattersall's became the first fully air-conditioned club in Brisbane.⁹³ New rooms were also fitted, and in 1946 these included a barbershop and cocktail bar. The latter was a daytime provision for members' wives or lady friends to use the Club, and quickly became known as the Ladies' Lounge.⁹⁴ Later additions included the opening of a massage room with Swedish sauna facilities in 1965, as well as the installation of Turkish baths.⁹⁵ The lounge at the northern end of the mezzanine facing Edward Street, meanwhile, became affectionately known as 'Eventide.'⁹⁶ While predominantly an area for reading and relaxation, it was also the place of departure for several elderly members, who at least spent their final moments in peace and comfort upon the luxurious leather chairs.

A \$50,000 redecoration of the Club Room took place in 1969 under the architectural partnership of Hall, Phillips and Wilson, whose senior partners included Lionel Phillips' son, David.⁹⁷ Their proposals observed that the interior of the Club was virtually unchanged since 1926, and acknowledged the delicate balance necessary in any potential alterations:

Any redecoration within the Club should also embrace the philosophy that our Club is, to use the vernacular, 'with it' – that old and young meet in harmony, that tradition be preserved whilst the young generate a continuance of tradition, which in time welds itself to the old.⁹⁸

The Club Room received new lighting, carpeting and wallpaper, along with additional new furniture including leather-upholstered timber chairs – although great care was taken to ensure that no 'hotel lounge' effect was created.⁹⁹ Fundamentally, however, the building

⁹¹ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 178.

⁹² *Courier-Mail*, 14 February 1953, 3.

⁹³ *Courier-Mail*, 28 February 1955; *Brisbane Telegraph*, 27 September 1954.

⁹⁴ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 185.

⁹⁵ TCAR 1965.

⁹⁶ TCAR 1962.

⁹⁷ TCAR 1969.

⁹⁸ Hall, Phillips and Wilson: Tattersall's Club: Proposed redecoration of Club Rooms, July 1968 (document).

⁹⁹ TCAR 1968.

remained much the same. While Tattersall's did not shy away from general maintenance – an annual loss of £9,140 in 1952, for instance, was largely attributed to the outlay on repairs, replacements and depreciation – it entered something of a period of consolidation from 1950 onwards.¹⁰⁰ This was understandable following the considerable expenditure towards property and additions between 1923 and 1949, when Tattersall's had spent approximately £200,000 on site acquisition, building, furniture and improvements.

The Club was also continuing to benefit from the decision made in the early 1920s to maintain a shopping arcade within the precinct. By 1960, there were three tenants facing Queen Street (Music Masters, Sophisticate Shoes and Healy's Menswear) and four facing Edward Street (Yorktown Café, Masterpiece Chocolates, Spier's Pharmacies and Buckby's Delicatessen). Inside the Arcade were Mariette's Frock Shop, Mark Parker's Hat Salon, the Arcadian Florists, and two new shops awaiting completion.¹⁰¹ Revenue from these leases contributed to around 50% of the Club's total income for most of the 1960s.¹⁰² This was often more than the income from membership fees, largely because the rental proceeds enabled the Club to maintain its low fee structure (an increase in fees to £6.6s. subscription and £15.15s. entrance in 1952 was only the second rise since 1923).¹⁰³ Profit from the Arcade was still contributing 32% of the total income in 1980, which remained a substantial proportion considering membership and its associated income had doubled since 1950.¹⁰⁴

While the Arcade had a lasting commercial impact, the relatively unchanged Club Room and Dining Hall were an enduring and significant component of the Club's identity. Both helped to maintain a sense of prestige and tradition among Tattersall's and its membership, whose experiences within the Club were indelibly entwined with its physical splendour, and they remained a major attraction for those visiting the Club or waiting to join. 'Few visitors to the Club ever fail to remark on the elegance of the huge Club Room and Dining Room,' testified life member Bill Boyan in 1991. 'If anything, their appeal has grown over the years.'¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ *Courier-Mail*, 26 January 1953, 7.

¹⁰¹ *Tattler*, 18 August 1960.

¹⁰² TCAR 1960-1969.

¹⁰³ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 182.

¹⁰⁴ TCAR 1980. The Club's total income of \$369,000 was made of membership subs (\$124,400), entrance fees (\$38,000), net property income (\$118,500), investment income (\$50,900) and trading profit (\$37,300).

¹⁰⁵ Boyan, 1991.

Senior member Ken Leitch captured the awe for many when recalling his first visit to Tattersall's with colleague (and future Lord Mayor of Brisbane) Clem Jones in 1951:

I can remember walking in from Queen Street thinking 'Where the hell is this man taking me?' The entrance was this old narrow passageway, and we walked up to an antiquated lift inside a cage. We got out the lift and I walked in, and I can still remember gasping. The bar was full, and the place was buzzing with excitement. We had drinks before lunch, but then I was equally amazed to see the Dining Hall. It stuck in my mind and that's why I joined. You opened the door, and it was like walking into Aladdin's Cave.¹⁰⁶

In the Club's centenary year, it was reported that the popularity of Tattersall's was 'based, as much as anything, upon being accepted into possibly the most architecturally magnificent club and dining rooms anywhere in Australia.'¹⁰⁷ The significance of the Club's premises in a wider context was underlined when they were entered onto the *Queensland Heritage Register* in October 1992. While acknowledging their aesthetic qualities and use of local materials, the buildings were also noted as 'an important illustration of the importation and translation of English social traditions to Queensland, remaining a substantially intact example of a traditional gentlemen's club providing luxuriously appointed rooms and facilities for its members.'¹⁰⁸ More recently, Brisbane-based architect Alice Hampson further emphasised the buildings' significance in terms of reflecting an architectural age in the city:

Interwar Brisbane was an architectural delight of period styles – architects could exercise within the style restraints of none. Few club buildings of the period were conceived on such a grand scale; fewer still have survived...It remains testament to a time when decoration was thought, exercised and mannered as a significant component in architectural design.¹⁰⁹

Ultimately, the enduring impact of the premises offers a prime example of one of the most noticeable aspects of continuity within Tattersall's, which remains true today and was certainly the case during the Club's centenary year. A Tattersall's without its Club Room and Dining Hall would have been unimaginable to virtually anyone connected with the Club in 1983. Similarly, the buildings had also become a recognised part of the CBD landscape. Given the longevity of Tattersall's and its success throughout the twentieth century, it is fair to conclude that the decision to build its own premises in 1926 was arguably the most

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Ken Leitch, conducted by the author, 29 February 2016.

¹⁰⁷ *Courier-Mail*, 15 October 1983, 29.

¹⁰⁸ 'Tattersall's Club,' *Queensland Heritage Register*.

¹⁰⁹ Hampson, "Tattersall's Club Dining Room," 145.

important in the Club's history. As Tattersall's reached 100 years, it was also a solid foundation on which to build towards the future.



Fig. 26. Tattersall's Club in 1983. Clockwise from top-left: the Edward Street façade, the Dining Hall, the Queen Street façade, the Billiard Room, and the Arcade viewed from Edward Street. (Photos: Tattersall's Club Centenary).

3) Activities and Hospitality

While much of the participation at the Club in the late 1800s centred around thoroughbred racing, this chapter explores the diversification of Tattersall's into other interests and activities throughout the twentieth century. The creation of several sporting subsidiary clubs and the introduction of events such as the popular Smoke Concert and the Dinner Dance catered for a variety of interests among the membership, while the Club's luncheon became a Brisbane institution among a growing body of city professionals. Tattersall's also became legendary for the hospitality it extended to both its members and guests. This chapter sheds some light on what occurred inside Tattersall's and how the Club utilised its enlarged and enhanced facilities as the century progressed. It highlights some of the ways in which the Club's character evolved during this time, and also explains how a strong sense of camaraderie continued to develop which ultimately came to define Tattersall's.

i) Games and gambling

Billiards was one of the first regular pastimes at Tattersall's that was dissociated from thoroughbred racing. A classic activity of the gentlemen's club – the Australian Club in Sydney had purchased a billiard table 'straight away' following its formation in 1838 – Tattersall's second home at Kent's Buildings (1887-1901) included a separate billiard room, while annual tournaments were taking place from at least 1902.¹ In 1906, both the quality of the prizes – a cheque for £21 alongside a trophy of the same value – and the facilities – several complimentary references were reportedly made by players towards the excellent standard of the Heiron and Smith table – demonstrated the Committee's regard for both the game's place within the Club as well as the pleasure of its members.² Such investment was rewarded by a Club Room that was crowded nightly throughout the tournament. President Forrest had spoken of his desire that the occasion be productive 'not only of good billiards but also of good fellowship among members,' and reports subsequently noted the 'splendid spirit shown in defeat' in the aftermath of the competition.³

Billiards continued to be an important part of daily Club life over the ensuing decades. In 1916, a full-time billiard marker was among the handful of staff employed by the Club, while

¹ *Australian Club Centenary*, 31; *Queensland Figaro*, 31 March 1888, 3.

² *Brisbane Courier*, 27 August 1906, 6.

³ *Sports Observer*, 24 June 1906; *Sports Observer*, 28 July 1906.

in 1926, Tattersall's claimed to possess the finest billiard facilities in the state at its new premises.⁴ Bill Boyan also recalled that, upon joining the Club in 1930, several of its most noticeable personalities were 'outstanding cueists.'⁵ Most prominent was Albert Sakzewski, an Australian Amateur Billiards Champion in 1932 who also won the Queensland Championship title six times.⁶ Tournaments contested in billiards and snooker were played every year throughout the century – Norm Reiken wrote his name into the record books by winning the Club Snooker Championship on ten consecutive occasions between 1971 and 1980 – while daily matches provided both friendly competition and an unwinding pastime for members.⁷ Senior member Leo Thomsen was well placed to summarise the experience in 2005, having played regularly on the Tattersall's tables since the 1960s. 'Between frames, one could receive tips on the share market, the current odds on all the sporting fixtures, savour the bar service, and enjoy the continuous banter from the side-lines,' he reflected.⁸

Card games were also popular at Tattersall's, with designated card rooms situated within the Club's earliest homes. Following the move to premises at 227 Queen Street in 1901, for example, two card rooms were added 'for the convenience of members.'⁹ In 1958, retiring staff member Ray Conway – who had joined Tattersall's in 1915 – recalled that the Club never really closed because of the late night games: 'At midnight the bar would close, but the players never left the Club and would play through until morning.'¹⁰ This was also a characteristic of the traditional gentlemen's clubs, where 'clubmen, by typical accounts, often ended their nights at the club with cards or billiards until two in the morning during the nineteenth century.'¹¹ The popularity of cards at Tattersall's was obvious when the Club moved to its new premises in 1926, which included several recreation rooms equipped with card tables for games of bridge, cribbage and poker. A Bridge Club was active from 1929 – weekly games took place on Thursdays – while a Bridge Championship was also introduced in June that year.¹² In November, there was even a successful mixed bridge night held with

⁴ TCM 1926.

⁵ Boyan, 1991.

⁶ *Tattler*, 23 July 1991.

⁷ TCAR 1980.

⁸ *Tattler*, Spring 2005.

⁹ TCAR 1902.

¹⁰ Conway, 1958.

¹¹ Black, *Victorian Clubland*, 34.

¹² Tattersall's Club Magazine, July 1930.

members' wives and guests. The event, attended by over 100, quite possibly marked the first function at Tattersall's that included females. Members and guests had to book well in advance to get a table at the bridge nights in the years that followed, while cribbage and domino tournaments also proved very popular within the Club during this time.¹³

Card games were naturally associated with gambling and, given the origin of Tattersall's as a betting institution, it was unsurprising that the activity was prominent within the Club, particularly among the bookmakers. Gambling was, in fact, a formative characteristic behind most of the traditional London clubs, as the likes of White's, Brooks' and Boodle's were all essentially established in the eighteenth century as 'regulated upper-class gaming houses.'¹⁴ Within Tattersall's, billiards was also often allied with wagering, and several disputed bets in excess of £100 were recorded before 1900. Even after World War Two, large side-wagers were commonplace in snooker, and on one occasion a prominent bookmaker even staked his house against what he owed his opponent. The bookmaker lost – and subsequently threw his house keys upon the table. The Committee later took a stand against big betting in the Billiard Room, not that it affected the popularity of a game that was frequently played more out of enjoyment and friendly competition than for winning large sums.¹⁵

A gambling culture was perhaps better represented in the Club's betting machines, with the poker machine recording a profit of nearly £300 in 1923.¹⁶ It is unclear thereafter exactly how many machines the Club owned or how profitable they were. At the Brisbane Club, estimates as to the annual worth of two alleged machines during the interwar years ranged from £600 to £4,000.¹⁷ Certainly, the 'fruit machine' at Tattersall's was reportedly 'rattling on as merrily as ever' in early 1931, where 'the tinkle of chips making money intermingled very pleasantly with the chatter of members.'¹⁸ The same press report attacked the freedom of bookmakers to set absurd odds upon the machines, and mused that the lack of disclosure regarding the appliances in the Club's annual reports was 'perhaps just an oversight.'¹⁹ While the fruit machines played for money, the poker machines issued winning coupons

¹³ *Brisbane Courier*, 15 November 1929, 24; *Tattler*, Spring 1999.

¹⁴ Milne-Smith, *London Clubland*, 23.

¹⁵ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 12.

¹⁶ TCM 1923.

¹⁷ Thomis, *Brisbane Club*, 15-16.

¹⁸ *Smith's Weekly* (Sydney), 12 February 1931.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

that could be used at the bar (which also sold grocery lines) or on the billiard tables.²⁰ When Godfrey Morgan (MLA) issued a parliamentary attack on the use of the machines by clubs without permits in October 1937, it was suggested that there were five or six at Tattersall's that contributed to the 'downright robbery.'²¹ An amendment to the *Vagrants, Gaming and other offences Act* supposedly enforced their removal one year later.²²



Fig. 27. One of the Edwardian betting slot machines used at Tattersall's up until the late 1930s – and possibly beyond. (Photo: Alex Lister, 2016).

Gambling nonetheless endured within the Club. Although it is uncertain how much money was involved, poker nights remained a feature at Tattersall's for much of the twentieth century. 'You'd come in any day, and the bookmakers would be upstairs in the card rooms,' recalled life member John Danaher, who joined Tattersall's in 1944.²³ However, while the card rooms remained fitted for their original purpose – and at least one would be occupied most evenings – they had become less of a focal point of Club life by the 1980s. Ultimately, alongside the fading Settling Day, it was clear that gambling within Tattersall's had declined alongside the Club's racing identity and bookmaking presence.

²⁰ *Tattler*, Spring 1999.

²¹ *Telegraph*, 12 October 1937, 8.

²² *The Evening News* (Rockhampton), 15 October 1938, 7.

²³ Danaher, 2015.

While billiards and snooker were continuously patronised, alternative activities also emerged within the Club such as indoor bowling. This was initiated by Secretary Ron Clelland upon his arrival in 1958 and attracted forty to fifty regular members each week up until the 1970s. ‘We only had these small mats that were 20 feet long and about 6 feet wide,’ recalled Clelland in 1991, ‘but it was a very intricate game and attracted a lot of attention.’²⁴ Annual competitions such as the Club Championship and Handicap – which attracted over 100 players in 1961 – were also popular among members.²⁵ Ken Leitch recalls indoor bowls as an integral part of his end-of-week routine at the Club during the 1960s. ‘At the time, we were the younger brigade – anything up to a dozen of us would play on Friday night in the Club,’ he says. ‘We’d have a great time, go for dinner, and then after we’d retire for a game of cards upstairs.’²⁶ Clelland believed indoor bowls was one of the activities that engendered friendship within the Club and contributed to a strong social atmosphere, while it also represented a further departure from the gambling culture of previous eras.²⁷



Fig. 28. The indoor bowls rink (bottom-right), c.1968. The room’s carpet was laid in the 1950s, while the iconic punkahs above the bar were installed in 1945. (Photo: Tattersall’s Club archives).

²⁴ Interview with Ron Clelland, conducted by Helen Gregory, 5 May 1991.

²⁵ TCAR 1961.

²⁶ Leitch, 2016.

²⁷ TCAR 1961.

ii) Subsidiary clubs

The formation of several sporting sub-clubs within Tattersall's demonstrated both the emergence of different interest groups and a growing camaraderie among the membership. Bowls, cricket and golf clubs were all established in the wake of members' own activities. Although the Tattersall's Bowls Club formed in 1928, photos of a members' team appeared as early as March 1924, while organised matches against the QTC were taking place by June 1926.²⁸ In 1927, golfing enthusiasts at Tattersall's began an annual outing to Southport links to meet the South Coast 'fooziliers' in a friendly game.²⁹ These excursions quickly proved popular and attracted newcomers to the sport within the Club. In January 1929, President Thomas Hall referenced the sport's growing popularity among members and encouraged the formation of the Tattersall's Golf Club in early 1930.³⁰ A Tattersall's cricket team, meanwhile, was competing in the early 1930s in friendly matches around Brisbane. On one occasion they received a barrage of criticism from a group of members watching and challenged their detractors to do better themselves. Subsequently, the Tattersall's 'Back-Seat' Cricket Club (later Backseaters) formed on 1 September 1933.³¹ All three sub-clubs received support from the Club's leadership, who obviously saw their potential. Hall, for instance, became the first president of both the cricketing and golfing clubs.



Fig. 29. Tattersall's Bowling Club was the first sub-club to form in 1928. Here is one of its earliest teams alongside bowlers representing Hamilton. (Photo: *Courier-Mail*, 14 June 1928).

²⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 6 March 1924, 10; *Brisbane Courier*, 16 June 1926, 10.

²⁹ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 18.

³⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 2 February 1929, 7; Tattersall's Club Magazine, July 1930.

³¹ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 19.

Each sub-club quickly spread the Tattersall's name in organised competition. On Wednesday afternoons, the bowlers would play both local bowls clubs and those further afield in Ipswich and Southport.³² Tournaments were also arranged: in February 1928, for instance, a Tattersall's team faced Clayfield, Toowong and Nundah.³³ Although the bowlers were 'under a deep debt of gratitude to all metropolitan clubs for the use of their playing greens,' they in turn brought a high-standard of competition, originally under the leadership of the 'indefatigable enthusiast' Alex Bell.³⁴ By 1951, the Bowls Club was playing forty matches a season and included over 100 members. While various annual trophies and traditions were introduced – for example, an annual series of home and away matches against Sydney City Tattersall's started in 1948 – the highlight of the bowlers' calendar began in 1966 with the introduction of the annual Australian Turf Bowlers Carnival, which has been competed for in every season since.³⁵ The competition usually consists of between ten and fifteen teams and takes place in a different city each year. For Tattersall's, it is best remembered between 1974 and 1976 when its bowlers won the carnival on three consecutive occasions. In the 1976 tournament, held in Canberra, a formidable team skippered by Harry Buss, Cliff Holdway and Keith Smith won all nine games that they competed in.³⁶

The golfers' first year in 1930 featured trophy contests in Southport and Indooroopilly, while the inaugural Tattersall's Golf Championship took place at Wynnum Links. Fittingly, the latter was won by William Boyce, who was the sub-club's first captain.³⁷ That same year, the inaugural Woodrow Cup – in which the Tattersall's bowlers and billiard players were also invited to compete within – took place at Sandgate Links.³⁸ The Golf Club's schedule continued to grow and within two years it offered ten trophies, with games taking place all over southeast Queensland from Toowoomba to the Royal Queensland Golf Club near Eagle Farm. By the 1950s, over 100 golfing members were participating in a full calendar of fixtures between April and October every season.³⁹

³² Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 232.

³³ *Brisbane Courier*, 16 February 1926, 7.

³⁴ *Tattersall's Club Magazine*, July 1930.

³⁵ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 232-3.

³⁶ *Tattler*, 31 March 1976.

³⁷ *Tattersall's Club Magazine*, July 1930.

³⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 11 December 1930, 7.

³⁹ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 236-7



Fig. 30. (left) Tattersall's Golf Club members D. K. Pane and F. Cleary check their cards while competing for the President's Trophy at Yeerongpilly in April 1939; (right) Golf Club President Harry Weld congratulates G. W. Whatmore on winning the L. Maxted Trophy at Victoria Park one month later. (Photos: Telegraph, 21 April 1939 and 6 May 1939).

Little is known about the Backseaters' earlier years, although the sub-club quickly settled into the routine of playing fortnightly matches against local teams such as the Wanderers, the QTC and, on several occasions, the Brisbane Women's Team.⁴⁰ By the 1950s, the cricketers had established their traditional matches against Sydney Tattersall's, the Combined Clergy, and the Queensland Schoolboys XI, by which stage they boasted a record membership of over 200.⁴¹ Opposition in later years also included the Anglican Church Grammar ('Churchie') Schoolboys – who recorded a 103-run victory over the Backseaters in 1961 – the RAAF and Army, the Cricketers Club, the Travel Industry, and the Press.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 12 October 1932, 14; *Telegraph*, 9 November 1937, 6

⁴¹ *Telegraph*, 10 November 1950, 19.

⁴² *Tattler*, 23 November 1961; Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 19.



Fig. 31. E. Thompson of the Backseaters takes on the bowling of the Women's Cricket Association Team, with Betty Webb wicket-keeping, at the Exhibition Oval in April 1938.

(Photo: Courier-Mail, 6 April 1938).

Beyond a sporting contribution, the sub-clubs also engaged with the community through their contribution to local charities. In the early 1950s, the bowlers began to hold an annual picnic in Tarragindi to raise funds towards the Montrose Home for children with disabilities. By 1958, over £600 was being raised each year.⁴³ The event moved to Redcliffe the following decade and remained a popular outing, with almost ninety children entertained by forty Bowls Club members in 1961.⁴⁴ During World War Two – which brought all three sub-clubs to a standstill – the Golf Club donated all its money to the Patriotic Fund and arranged a fundraising Patriotic March. Thereafter, the golfers made regular contributions to the likes of Mount Oliver Hospital (Kangaroo Point) and Pleasantville Home (Wynnum).⁴⁵ From its establishment, the Backseaters raised funds for charitable causes from the receipts of its games. Between 1948 and 1951, some £3,000 was distributed to beneficiaries such as the Mater Children's Hospital and the West End Creche and Kindergarten Association.⁴⁶

⁴³ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 232.

⁴⁴ *Tattler*, 14 December 1961.

⁴⁵ Longhurst, *Friendship*, 236-7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

Annual charity barbeque-picnics also became a fixture in the cricketers' calendar. In 1960, for instance, underprivileged children from the Xavier, Tufnell and Montrose homes were entertained at Ferney Grove by a 'merry gang of Backseaters' and Club President Leo Power, where they enjoyed unlimited T-bone steaks, fruit and ice cream.⁴⁷ While all of the cricket matches reflected a benevolent and community-driven endeavour, the annual game against the Queensland Schoolboys' XI – itself a show of support for the state's young cricketers – was a particular highlight. Ever since the inaugural game, the Backseaters had presented blazers for the boys to wear to the interstate carnival. In 1959, a young John Maclean played in the match at the Gabba as a schoolboy and was presented with his blazer by Backseater and former Australian Test wicketkeeper Wally Grout. Maclean went on to become a Test player himself (and Backseaters' captain) – he also later served as Tattersall's President between 1999 and 2001.⁴⁸ A charitable nature was sometimes evident in the Backseaters' performances too, such as when 13-year-old fast-bowler Richard Searle obliterated its batting line-up at the Exhibition in February 1948, taking seven wickets for six runs.⁴⁹

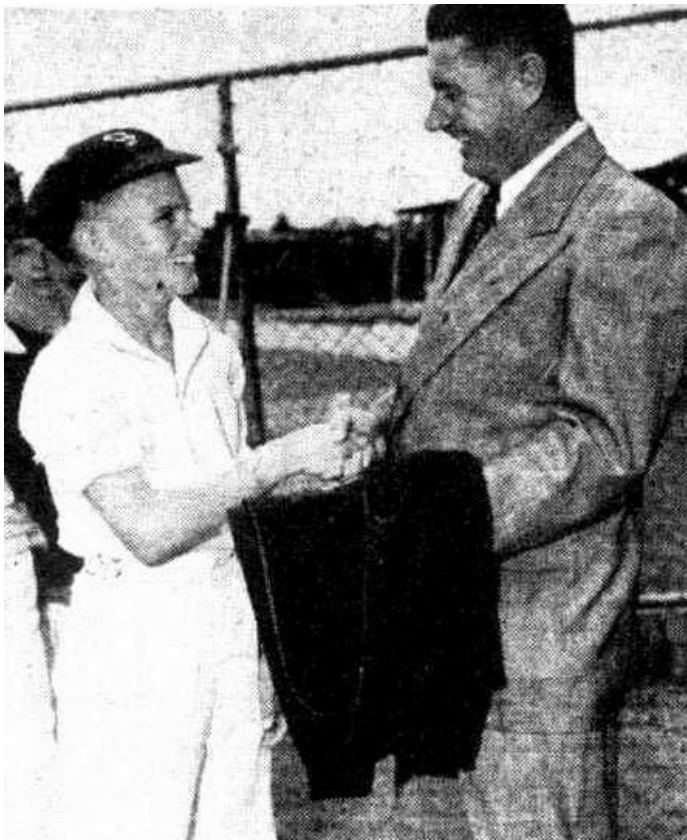


Fig. 32. G. C. Edwards, Vice President of the Tattersall's Backseaters' Club, presents the Queensland Schoolboys' Captain S. L. Mackay with a blazer at the annual match at the Gabba in March 1951.

(Photo: Brisbane Telegraph, 8 March 1951).

⁴⁷ *Tattler*, 18 September 1960.

⁴⁸ *Tattler*, Winter 1999.

⁴⁹ *Telegraph*, 26 February 1948, 11.

The subsidiary clubs did much to develop and strengthen friendship among members – with close bonds established during the regular activities – and there was unsurprisingly a strong social element to each group. For example, shortly after its revival in 1946 following World War Two, the Bowls Club introduced an annual Christmas dinner in the Dining Hall. At its peak, the event attracted over 100 bowlers and their guests who all enjoyed a live orchestra and some ‘fantastic tangos.’⁵⁰ In 1938, the Golf Club held its first dinner-dance at a lavishly decorated Bellevue Hotel – where the official table was replete with a miniature clubhouse surrounded by a golf course of real turf and marked with flagged holes, creeks and bunkers – which attracted 120 guests including representatives from each metropolitan golf club.⁵¹

Golf was in fact played so frequently that a separate group formed within the sub-club. Generally, the golfers played two Thursdays a month, while some played an extra Thursday with the Master Builders. The ‘Tatts Splinters’ was made up of those who played on the remaining free Thursday. Formed in 1966, its first game took place at Redland Bay, and its original members included Claude Jacobs (then Golf Club President), Kevin Kent, Loftus Foote, Jack Honey and Jim Scott. Kent and his wife, Thel, were renowned for providing legendary hospitality before and after each Splinters game.⁵² From the 1970s, Jacobs also organised over twenty overseas tours to New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, Canada, the US, Europe and the UK. ‘Golf wasn’t the main thing,’ he reflected. ‘It was companionship and friendship.’⁵³ Added to that was good, boyish fun: one sojourn in Hawaii culminated in bookmaker Merv Cooper downing champagne out of a brand-new pair of \$400 shoes.⁵⁴

The Backseaters also promoted a welcoming and social atmosphere, though it was originally declared that no A-grade cricketers could become members to encourage players of all abilities.⁵⁵ While this rule was later lifted – or, at least, retired and former first-class players were permitted to sign up – the appeal of the sub-club was only enhanced as Club members rubbed shoulders with star names within the same team. Backseaters including Ken Mackay, Ron Archer, Peter Burge and Tom Veivers all played for Australia during the 1950s and 1960s – and held nearly 120 Test appearances between them – while Wally Grout regularly

⁵⁰ Leitch, 2016.

⁵¹ *Courier-Mail*, 25 October 1938, 1.

⁵² *Tattler*, Winter 2010.

⁵³ Jacobs, 1991.

⁵⁴ *Tattler*, Winter 2010

⁵⁵ Minutes of Tattersall’s ‘Back-Seat’ cricketers 1933.

played and umpired for the Backseaters following a career of 51 Tests.⁵⁶ Widely considered one of the game's greatest fast bowlers, Ray Lindwall – who took 228 Test wickets between 1946 and 1960 – captained the Backseaters for twelve years from 1964.⁵⁷ Despite the growing inclusion of such talent, captain George Warlow declared in 1960 that 'everybody gets a bat and bowl no matter how bad,' and a convivial ethos remained.⁵⁸

The success of the three sub-clubs eventually encouraged others to follow suit. While some failed – an attempt to form a 'Harriers' group in the wake of the running boom was aborted in 1975 – a tennis sub-club proved more enduring.⁵⁹ Tennis had been popular among members for some time, and there had been talk of a sub-club forming in as early as 1930, especially since Bert St John – an Australasian Championship doubles champion and singles runner-up – was a Tattersall's member.⁶⁰ Nothing materialised, however, although the occasional match did take place over subsequent decades. In December 1953, for example, a group of Tattersall's players beat a team of parliamentarians in Milton.⁶¹ It was not until the 1970s, however, that the 'Racqueteers' successfully formed, and it took most of the decade to gather momentum. With numbers of around sixty by 1978, the new sub-club followed in the footsteps of its predecessors in engaging local competition. In 1981, the tennis players challenged the Queensland Club to a tournament that has been played every year since. Social traditions were also established, such as the regular family matches and barbeques on Sundays. The weekly games on Thursdays remained competitive but, in the words of long-term Racqueteers' President Adrian Symons, included 'a healthy dose of pot shots and sledging.'⁶² In following the positive template set by the original sub-clubs, the Racqueteers provided another successful sporting group for members to engage with.

From their inception, the subsidiary clubs represented alternative interests among the membership, and further demonstrated that the Club did not have to rely on racing to bring

⁵⁶ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 19; 'Wally Grout – Player Profile,' accessed 7 June 2017, <http://www.howstat.com/cricket/Statistics/Players/PlayerOverview.asp?PlayerId=0666>.

⁵⁷ 'Ray Lindwell: Obituary,' originally printed in the *Wisden Cricketers' Almanac 1997*, ed. Matthew Engel, reprinted online at ESPN Cricinfo, accessed 9 June 2017, <http://www.espncricinfo.com/australia/content/player/6299.html>.

⁵⁸ *Tattler*, 20 October 1960.

⁵⁹ *Tattler*, 30 April 1975.

⁶⁰ *Tattersall's Club Magazine*, July 1930.

⁶¹ *Courier-Mail*, 3 December 1953, 12; TCAR 1970.

⁶² Interview with Adrian Symons, conducted by the author, 15 January 2016.

its membership together. It was also noteworthy that the original three sub-clubs formed shortly after the move to the new premises in 1926. Members were meeting regularly at a place where they felt at home – and at a Club that appeared set for a long future – and it is fair to assume that this encouraged members to identify shared interests among one another. In addition, the sub-clubs contributed to the Club’s sporting ethos, while friendship was facilitated through shared participation and enjoyment. As Claude Jacobs summarised, the sub-clubs made ‘the Club a little different from some of the clubs around – it breeds friendships that wouldn’t normally occur as much or so rapidly as you do if you join.’⁶³

The longevity of the sub-clubs was achieved without Tattersall’s possessing any real sporting facilities, which was testament to the ability of those involved to foster goodwill among the local community via regular, friendly competition and charitable endeavour. The sub-clubs also undoubtedly added value to membership. ‘I do know of quite a few who started as members with the Bowls Club, and subsequently applied for membership of the main Club,’ recalls Leitch, a bowler since 1958.⁶⁴ In turn, Tattersall’s support was unwavering. ‘We found that our clubs within the Club were great ambassadors for us no matter where they went,’ reflected Clelland. ‘Their reputation for good behaviour, sportsmanship and general personal appearance was completely exemplary, and consequently they were pretty well regarded by the Committee insofar as financial assistance each season.’⁶⁵

iii) The Tattersall’s luncheon

As the twentieth century progressed, the Tattersall’s luncheon emerged to become one of the most recognisable and iconic features of the Club. The daily event evidenced a growing culture within Tattersall’s where members of different professions in the city gathered at a central location at midday to either network, meet with colleagues or simply socialise over good food and drink in elegant, comfortable surroundings. Though it is appropriate to associate this practice with the new Dining Hall from 1939, the origins of the Club luncheon can be traced to more modest beginnings. At Isles Love in 1916, for instance, Ray Conway recalled buying lunch supplies for members at 10am each day. This consisted of 4lb silverside, half-a-dozen tomatoes, cucumber, ¼lb onions and two-dozen ‘real sausage rolls,

⁶³ Jacobs, 1991.

⁶⁴ Leitch, 2016.

⁶⁵ Clelland, 1991.

with plenty of filling.’ Conway would spread the counter lunch on the table before it was ‘devoured by members.’⁶⁶ The modest amount of food would suggest that there were only a small number of dedicated lunch attendees. Following the move to Edward Street, however, the new catering department proved so popular that the cold-room was expanded in 1927 to offer a wider range of meals. By 1930, the luncheon was already an important occasion for a diverse mix of professionals in the city – amid an enduring sporting ethos – as the Club’s in-house magazine described:

Tattersall’s at lunchtime is a sight to see. Here may be seen medico and barrister-at-law and his younger brother, the solicitor of the city – the architect, the journalist and the philosopher, cheeky by jowl with the big and small businessmen and commercial travellers. The spirit of camaraderie, the banter of wits, all serve to make of an incident in a day’s march...Wholesome viands, delightfully served up on clean glass-topped tables, seasoned with the latest stories of sport or trade, make a culinary epoch in an otherwise flat and prosaic life. Here the statesman in embryo may meet the politician *in esse* and here the latest performance in golf will meet with the latest turf performance of note. Nothing of moment is passed by or missed without an appropriate seasoning of the *esprit de corps* so exclusively found at Tattersall’s. In days, when we are old...we will remember with a reverence akin to devotion those happy lunch hours at the Club.⁶⁷

It appears that the culture of the Tattersall’s luncheon did not completely derive from its new Dining Hall; rather, the additional facilities in 1939 were built to facilitate a growing demand within the Club. Nonetheless, the Dining Hall’s grandeur, space and specific function was unlike anything the Club had possessed before and it elevated the luncheon to another level. It also further enhanced the Club’s professional appearance and reputation and, following its opening, *Truth* duly referred to Tattersall’s as a meeting place of doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, commercial men, and bank and business managers, while highlighting the misconception that it was purely an ‘aggregation of bookmakers.’⁶⁸ *The Telegraph* also supported this view in summarising the overall position of the Club:

To the man on the street, Tattersall’s Club is a bookmakers’ club, but it is a fact that bookmakers form but a small minority in club circles and it is interesting to note that the bulk of the members have yet to patronise bookmaking members in the matter of betting...Tattersall’s Club is an exclusive and friendly club for men in every walk of life. It

⁶⁶ Conway, 1958.

⁶⁷ *Tattersall’s Club Magazine*, December 1930.

⁶⁸ *Truth*, 2 July 1939, 29.

certainly has done much to assist the sporting world, but as a rendezvous for the businessman it has no peer in Australia.⁶⁹

Naturally, the new Dining Hall also brought expanded and refined menus for up to 150 diners at a time during each working day in the years following its opening:

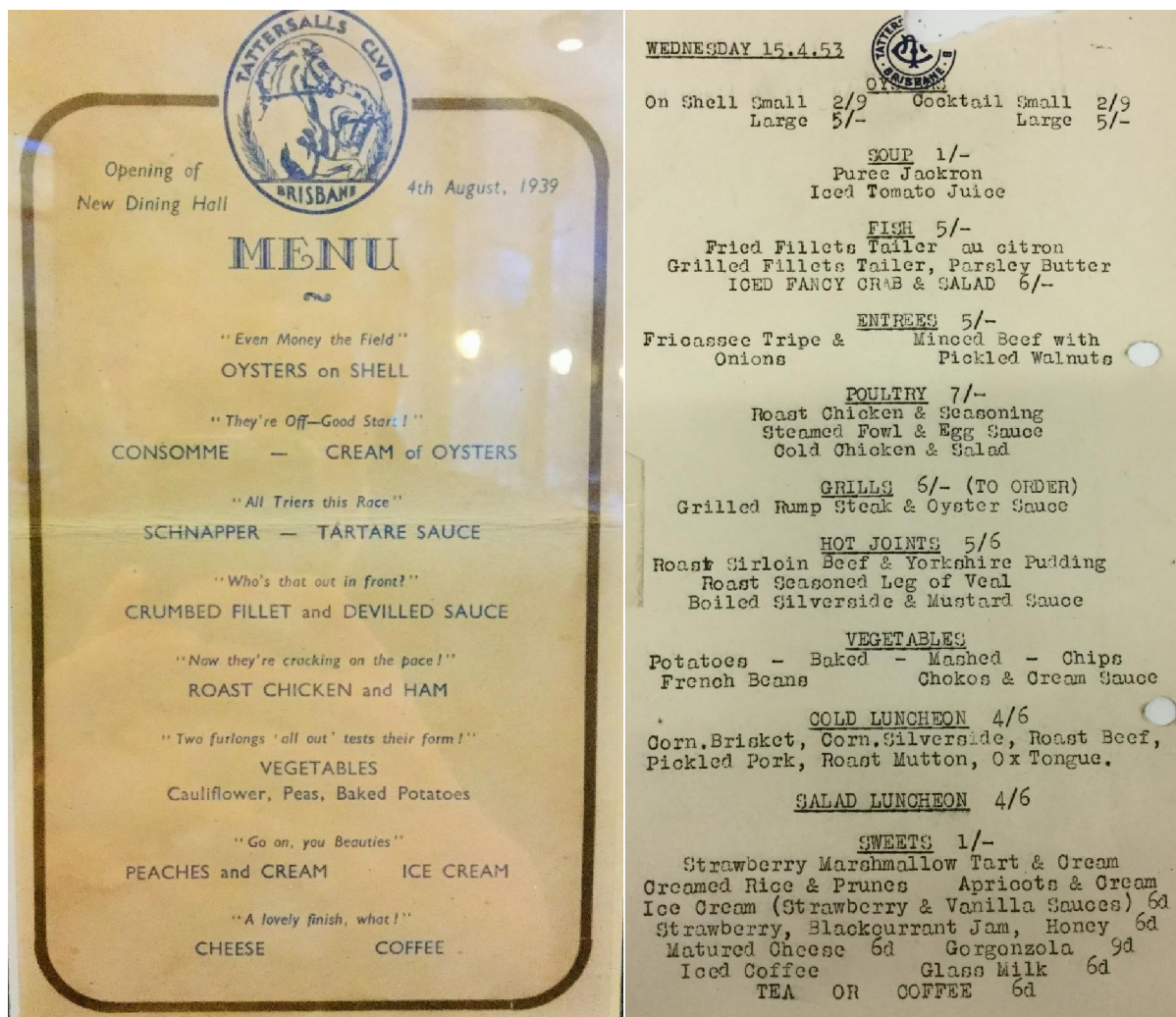


Fig. 33. (left) Menu from the opening of the Dining Hall on 4 August 1939 – each course was paired with a racing reference; (right) a later menu from April 1953. (Photos: Alex Lister, 2016).

Despite restrictions on supplies and increases in menu prices owing to the rising cost of foods, the Tattersall's luncheon persevered throughout World War Two. Following the influx of servicemen inside the Club, however, Chef Malpas stated that he was unable to continue

⁶⁹ *Telegraph*, 26 June 1939, 19.

‘under present conditions’ in March 1943. Six years later, the Club enforced a full ban on metropolitan visitors to limit numbers.⁷⁰ This brought criticism from members – the Club was an established venue for business lunches after all – as well as the press, who mourned ‘the death of the whole Club spirit’ and questioned whether Tattersall’s was ‘afraid of the beer ration or the lunch queue.’⁷¹ The rule was subsequently relaxed in the early 1950s. As dress standards also returned to conventional means – coat, shirt and tie – the luncheon tradition carried on much as before, although it was not until 1953 that a small profit was recorded in catering (following six years of losses owing to the cost of supplies).⁷² There were additional options on the menu, but the Club had a popular core that adhered to an expectancy among its members and guests – even if items were now twice the pre-war cost.

By the 1960s, two sittings for lunch were taking place on Fridays for over 300 members and their guests, while Thursdays also began to experience a similar demand.⁷³ There were also alternative arrangements available in the Club: the Chandelier Lounge, for instance, joined the mezzanine level as a private lunch facility in 1970.⁷⁴ The luncheon menu and relatively quick turnover between sittings reflected the needs of members: quality wholesome food that could be served quickly. Longer, and often boozy, lunches were also prominent – particularly on Fridays – but generally there was a vague expectation that members and associates would need to return to the office. Another important factor behind the enduring popularity of the Club luncheon was its outstanding value. Despite increases in wages and the cost of raw materials, the Committee’s policy was to keep prices at an absolute minimum – members of a club should, after all, expect some sort of subsidy. ‘It is not your Committee’s desire to obtain exorbitant profits from the Dining Hall,’ reiterated the 1963 Annual Report.⁷⁵ As the annual net profit from catering averaged only 3.75% of the total catering revenue each year between 1963 and 1983, the policy was clearly adhered to.⁷⁶

Within a club environment, particular lunch groups were commonplace and became traditions in their own right. For example, the Lamont Table formed for lunch on Fridays in

⁷⁰ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 174.

⁷¹ *Sunday Mail*, 16 October 1949, 1.

⁷² Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 182.

⁷³ TCAR 1969.

⁷⁴ TCAR 1971

⁷⁵ TCAR 1963.

⁷⁶ TCAR 1963-1983.

1959. The group consisted of Ray Lamont, Peter Evans, Tom Burrell and Nowell Taylor, who were all presidents of the Brisbane Junior Chamber of Commerce between 1956 and 1961.⁷⁷ Within a short space of time the group did not even have to order, as the dining room staff knew what to arrange. 'If we were in Brisbane, we'd always come to lunch together,' recalled Taylor, who added that the group never experienced any trouble being seated, even on the busy Fridays ('The Lamont table was held!'). Taylor and Evans continued to represent the table until they both passed away in 2016, bringing an end to a tradition that had lasted fifty-seven years. 'The lunches were a significant part of my life I suppose – part of my life's programme,' reflected Taylor. 'We maintained a depth of friendship.'⁷⁸

Another lunch group, Table 19, was established in 1971. The name referred to the table that Ken Campbell, Bill Perrin, Allan Lanis and Bill Sheehan were seated at during their first Friday lunch together. 'Back then we were all workaholics – starting early, finishing late,' recalled Campbell in 2007, 'and we thought Friday would be a good time to come in and have a two-hour lunch.' The group's longevity reflects its dependable enjoyment of the Club luncheon. 'That is how much we love the Club – the atmosphere, the food, the wine and the staff who look after us so well,' he added. 'We are all traditionalists and as such we like some of the meals that our wives might not like us to eat: lamb's fry, lambs' brains and bacon, pea and ham soup, oxtail, crumbed cutlets.'⁷⁹ Like the Lamont Table, the group represents a strong friendship nurtured within the Club. 'I have enjoyed this luncheon group because of the people,' said Graeme Avers, who joined Table 19 in the late 1980s. 'It is great to meet mates on a regular basis and follow each other's lives and stories in great surroundings.'⁸⁰

The luncheon at Tattersall's undoubtedly became one of the Club's most prominent characteristics in its first 100 years. It was already a notable feature following the Club's move to its Edward Street premises but was further enhanced and enlarged by the building of the Dining Hall in 1939, of which there were few equals in Brisbane's CBD. In addition, the wholesome, traditional food, reliable price structure and familiar surroundings elevated lunch at Tattersall's into an established Brisbane institution. With an average 54,000 meals

⁷⁷ *Tattler*, Autumn 1998.

⁷⁸ Interview with Nowell Taylor, conducted by the author, 11 September 1915.

⁷⁹ *Tattler*, Summer 2007.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

served every year between 1960 and 1983, it was an integral component of Club life.⁸¹ The Club had become an important part of the working week for many, and had clearly adapted from the late 1800s when members predominantly met to discuss racing or place bets with bookmakers. Of course, the racing character did not disappear completely. The atmosphere would have often centred around the turf after settling on Monday mornings, or on Fridays before the weekend's races. Those individuals at the luncheon increasingly represented a mixed body of professionals, however, and epitomised Tattersall's evolving identity.

iv) Smoke concerts

The Tattersall's Smoke Concert was one of the first organised functions at the Club with no association to racing. The first concert took place in 1904 and was attended by around eighty members and friends.⁸² It was likely held in response to the 'quiet times prevailing' and the limited attendances at the Club's 'calling of the race card' evenings, which *Truth* had reported upon in March.⁸³ The article also highlighted that 'the Bodega Club, with its bar ladies and other attractions, has taken much patronage from the betting institution,' and advised that a smoke concert 'might rouse members a bit.'⁸⁴ Such concerts were a feature of particular gentlemen's clubs such as the Savage Club in London, which became well-known for its smoke concerts following its formation in 1857.⁸⁵ The concerts at Tattersall's – male-only by tradition – originally coincided with the conclusion of its billiard tournament in August or September, and the distribution of prizes were a key part of the programme. Early concerts also featured a range of musical performances including singers and accompanists, piano forte solos, songs performed by the Theatre Royal and members of the Banjo Club, and various gramophone selections – all within 'a splendidly decorated concert hall.'⁸⁶ In 1908, the event further diversified with several boxing bouts taking place, while attendances began to exceed 100.⁸⁷ Naturally, smoking was commonplace throughout.

The concerts disappeared from the annual calendar during World War One, though several tattoos – which essentially followed a similar format but with a militaristic theme – were

⁸¹ TCAR 1960-1983.

⁸² *Brisbane Courier*, 1904 (precise date unknown).

⁸³ *Truth*, 6 March 1904, 7.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Black, *Victorian Clubland*, 43.

⁸⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, 15 August 1905, 6; *Brisbane Courier*, 27 August 1906, 6.

⁸⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 18 September 1908, 3.

held in 1916.⁸⁸ A Smoke Concert did follow in June 1917, which was mainly held for the entertainment of country members during Exhibition Week. Many visiting sportsmen from Melbourne and Sydney were also present, in what was reportedly 'one of the largest and most representative gatherings ever seen in the Club's spacious rooms.'⁸⁹ Despite its success, it was not until the opening of the new premises at Edward Street in 1926 that another concert took place. Making the most of the stage and the increased space – the Club Room floor, lounge and balcony were at full capacity – the concert was the longest and most musically varied yet. Running from 8 until 11.30pm, twenty-two items ranged from male choirs to the Hilo Hawaiian Orchestra, before a rousing communal rendition of *God Save The King* concluded events.⁹⁰ The June 1927 programme was similarly extensive with added xylophone and cornet solos, while a performance of *The Lost Chord* by Peter Valley was even repeated upon special request from the audience.⁹¹

The male-only nature of the event was altered in August 1931 at a mammoth Smoke Concert held for the visiting participants of the Australasian Bowling Championship Carnival, where wives and female guests of both members and bowlers were invited to occupy the mezzanine level surrounding the Club Room.⁹² The extensive programme – a mixture of instrumental, vocal and comedy performances – also featured many female performers for the first time, including soprano Phyllis Dawth, violinist Vera Peterson, and the Melody Maids ('a trio of dainty girls') who provided a choral and instrumental act. The 1,000 attendees – a figure possibly exaggerated by the press – contributed to a 'dominating atmosphere of conviviality and good fellowship' within a Club that was transformed into 'a high-class vaudeville house,' with surrounding flags and a stage draped in silver tissue.⁹³ The Smoke Concert remained the Club's 'Ladies' Night' for a several more years, though the attendance had returned to a more modest 150 by October 1933.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ *Truth*, 21 May 1916, 3.

⁸⁹ *Telegraph*, 8 June 1917, 3.

⁹⁰ *Telegraph*, 12 November 1926, 3.

⁹¹ *Telegraph*, 9 June 1927, 6.

⁹² *Brisbane Courier*, 27 August 1931, 5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Courier-Mail*, 13 October 1933, 20.



Fig. 34. A packed Tattersall's hosts visiting interstate and New Zealand bowlers ahead of the Australasian Bowling Championship Carnival in 1931. The carnival, which began in 1904, was a precursor to the Turf Bowlers Carnival that the Tattersall's Bowls Club still compete in. (Photo: Brisbane Courier, 27 August 1931).

Following the outbreak of World War Two – and perhaps the reduction in stage size after the installation of the new kitchen in 1939 – the event disappeared from the Tattersall's calendar. In July 1946, however, the function returned to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Club's move to Edward Street.⁹⁵ There was also a Christmas Smoke Concert held later that year, and the event became an annual end-of-year, members-only function thereafter. There was a renewed enthusiasm towards the concerts under Clelland from 1958, and crowds of between 400 and 600 members attended during the 1960s. 'They would come out of the woodwork, and they would come out of the oil wells in Innamincka,' recalled the former secretary. 'You would see faces that you hadn't seen throughout the year, but they were determined to put an appearance in at least – one they rather delighted

⁹⁵ *Telegraph*, 30 July 1946, 12.

in.⁹⁶ Well-known commentator Andy Stevens was responsible for compering the event and selecting the right performers. 'It was basically just high-class entertainment,' summarised Clelland. 'Good comedy but clean comedy, novelty acts that were suitable.'⁹⁷ Stevens brought in talent such as celebrated Australian tenor Donald Smith, whose first professional engagement was on the Club stage in the late 1940s, while the host – who provided over thirty years of service in the role – was himself a useful presence. 'He had a very presentable voice, and a very presentable manner – he kept the place entertained,' recalls Ken Leitch, who adds that the seated set-up made it seem 'like you'd gone to the theatre.'⁹⁸

The longevity of the event owed much to a consistently strong and varied programme year after year. Each concert tried to improve upon the previous occasion, and attendees were left in anticipation as to what sort of night awaited. Clelland remembered two contrasting but equally memorable performances that took place during the 1960s:

We had one girl who was a very good singer but, unbeknownst to me, she was also a good 'wiggle' artist. The singing was received very well because she was extremely good. Then when she got towards the end, she decided to go into her full repertoire and got into her semi-strip tease. It would have been all right if she'd stayed onstage, but she came down and sat on (Committeeman) Jack Le Grand's lap. Well, the roar that went up that particular night hasn't been heard since I wouldn't think.

Some years later – and for the life of me I can't remember her name – but a 16-year-old had won all the prizes at the Eisteddfod for violin, and I said that we wanted her on the bill. She eventually went on to become lead violinist in the London Philharmonic Orchestra, so she had talent. We got her here about a month after the Eisteddfod and she said, 'What would you like me to play?' I said I had a leaning towards humoresque and barcarolle. And she went into *Flight of the Bumble Bee* and *Humoresque* – then the members stood and clapped her off that stage for five minutes. She was fabulous. I saw some oldies there, and they had tears running down their faces.⁹⁹

Sadly, the event began to falter in the 1970s, and in 1978 attendance was so disappointing that the Committee considered a 'revision to the function in character and format.'¹⁰⁰ 'It went out of existence for a number of reasons,' reflected Clelland. 'Andy was having difficulty getting the right type of artists, and it seemed to have lost some of its appeal. Some seemed to think it was the advent of television that changed the whole complex, and

⁹⁶ Clelland, 1991.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Leitch, 2016; TCAR 1978.

⁹⁹ Clelland, 1991.

¹⁰⁰ TCAR 1972 and 1978.

when we put it on it invariably clashed with a football match or something – there was always something against us.’¹⁰¹ It was decided to refrain from holding a concert in 1979, breaking a continuous run of over thirty years. In 1980, two new end-of-year events – the Country Members’ Hour and the Members’ Christmas Get-Together – were initiated in its place, marking the end of an iconic Club function that had begun seventy-five years earlier.



Fig. 35. Tattersall’s Secretary Ron Clelland (1958-84), photographed in the late-1970s. Clelland was secretary for a record twenty-five years and helped to rejuvenate social life at the Club after his arrival in 1958, playing an important role in functions including the Smoke Concert, the Dinner Dance, the At Home and the Getting to Know You nights.

(Photo: Tattersall’s Club archives).

v) Dinner-dances

The Dinner Dance was another iconic Club event that emerged at Tattersall’s in the mid-twentieth century. Although it arrived much later than the Smoke Concert, the Dinner Dance was more significant as it took place every week. It also encouraged regular female attendance at the Club, with members able to bring their wives, family or guests on every

¹⁰¹ Clelland, 1991.

occasion. Its regularity and success, meanwhile, offered some resistance to the gradual decline in evening attendances at the Club during the second half of the century.

The idea of a mixed company dance had existed for a while within Tattersall's. Member J. Webb suggested at the 1936 Annual Meeting that the Club should hold an annual dance similar to the one held at the Sydney Tattersall's. Although the matter was considered, President Healy pointed out that Sydney's club had the advantage of a splendid ballroom.¹⁰² Annual balls of some description were eventually held at Tattersall's – possibly following the opening of the Dining Hall in 1939 – though there are few specific details on record.¹⁰³ It was not until 1955 that a dinner-dance function was seriously discussed. In November, Secretary Raymond Layton took a trip to Melbourne to assess the organisation required for such an evening, and visited some thirty-nine institutions.¹⁰⁴ Whether Layton was inspired by what he saw, or matters simply got out of hand, the first Dinner Dance at Tattersall's on 17 March 1956 reportedly took a wild turn, with *Truth* claiming that 'one of the city's biggest clubs' had turned its 'festive night into an orgy.'¹⁰⁵

The occasion had become a permanent fixture on Friday evenings by the following year, and had seemingly assumed a more reserved character. A parquet platform was installed into the centre of the Dining Hall to accommodate dancing, while music was regularly provided by pianist Daisy McLean, accompanied by drums and saxophone ('the Daisy McLean trio'). Between 1949 and 1968, McLean also played in a ten-piece band who were renowned throughout Brisbane, performing at City Hall balls, Government House functions, and even a reception for Princess Alexandra at Caloundra's Perle Hotel in 1959.¹⁰⁶ The weekly nights at Tattersall's provided a more relaxed setting, with typical numbers including *Blue Moon*, *I'm In the Mood for Love* and *Goodnight Sweetheart*. 'I have always enjoyed playing at Tattersall's because there is such a friendly atmosphere,' McLean reflected in 1983, a time when she was still performing regularly at the Club.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² *Courier-Mail*, 31 January 1936.

¹⁰³ *Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Anniversary Celebration*, 25.

¹⁰⁴ (Paper unknown – possibly *Truth*), 10 November 1955.

¹⁰⁵ *Truth*, 25 March 1956.

¹⁰⁶ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 12.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*



Fig. 36. 'The Daisy McLean Trio' performing from the Dining Hall mezzanine at a Dinner Dance in the late 1970s. (Photo: Tattersall's Club archives).

Clelland had taken over the running of the Dinner Dance in 1958 and oversaw strong attendances throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Special gala nights, which took place following the Club's race meetings on Saturdays, were among the most popular each year. Clelland was also in attendance every week with his wife, Betty, and they both assumed an important role. 'Practically every night, we would be the first to dance to get the scaredy-cats up on to the floor,' he recalled.¹⁰⁸ The event was an attractive proposition for several reasons. Clearly, it was a chance for members to share their club with wives, family and guests in what was otherwise a male and member-only institution, while everybody could dine and dance to a live band and end the working week with panache. With several theatres along Queen Street, the Dinner Dance was also an ideal way to begin the evening. When *My Fair Lady* was in Brisbane in October 1961, for example, several new faces appeared in the Dining Hall as 'many members, wives and friends had dinner in style at Tatts

¹⁰⁸ Clelland, 1991.

prior to going to the show.¹⁰⁹ Members also used the event to mark significant private occasions in the comfort of their Club. At one Dinner Dance in January 1971, for example, Arthur Colledge held a birthday and engagement party at his table; Harold Davis bade farewell to his son who was leaving for Fiji the following Monday; while Federal Member Bob Katter hosted a dinner party for two visiting 'top-brass' Americans.¹¹⁰ Committeemen also regularly hosted large tables, and a real family atmosphere permeated the Dinner Dance between the Club's leadership, staff, membership and guests, which contributed to the event's jovial nature and enduring popularity. A high-spirited scene was never hard to come by: in June 1962, for example, solicitor Jack Powell and his guest were accidentally covered in a basin of soup by a waitress, yet Powell was soon seen 'doing a most energetic twist on the dancefloor.' When asked for the reason behind his sudden moves, he gleefully exclaimed that 'it's the only way I can shake the soup out of my suit!'¹¹¹

Despite being a recognised and reliably well-attended event in the decades following its establishment, there was concern for the Dinner Dance in the early 1980s. The 1982 Annual Report envisaged that the evening might 'later require some curtailment,' a prognosis not helped by the cancellation of two successive dinner-dances in October 1983 due to a lack of support.¹¹² As the Club reached its centenary, it was clear that falling evening attendances were a threat – even to signature events – and that future innovations might be necessary.

vi) Other events amid a changing society

While regular functions were established, one-off events also featured in the events programme. In an early sign of the diverse interests among members, and a willingness of the Club to promote something different, a demonstration of jiu-jitsu took place at Tattersall's in August 1924.¹¹³ This was courtesy of A. Tilbury, principal of the Saxon School of Physical Culture, which offered open-air classes that were popular with businessmen seeking 'scientific exercise.'¹¹⁴ A separate, and again successful, display of jiu-jitsu and boxing was also demonstrated in the Club Room in February 1931.¹¹⁵ In a further show of

¹⁰⁹ *Tattler*, 2 November 1961.

¹¹⁰ *Tattler*, 27 January 1971.

¹¹¹ *Tattler*, 21 June 1962.

¹¹² TCAR 1982; *Tattler*, 4 October 1983.

¹¹³ TCM 1924.

¹¹⁴ *Daily Mail*, 12 March 1923, 4.

¹¹⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 14 February 1931, 21.

variety in 1959, the Club Room was cleared of all its tables and chairs and marked out as a badminton court for visiting teams from England and New Zealand, who competed in front of attendees at the first Tattersall's Father and Son Night. The matches were followed by an exhibition of judo, boxing and taekwondo from twenty martial arts experts.¹¹⁶

While these were hardly regular events – the father and son nights were not properly re-established until the late 1980s – other functions were introduced in anticipation that they might become permanent fixtures on the Club's calendar. The President's At Home, for members and their wives or partners, was introduced by the Committee in November 1958 to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of Tattersall's. Attendance was in the 'vicinity of 750 people,' while the array of food was so vast that even the billiard tables had to be utilised as serveries. The Club was heavily decorated with floral arrangements, organised by Betty Clelland, and consequently resembled 'an absolute fairyland.'¹¹⁷ The success and popularity of the occasion ensured its continuation, and after 600 attended in 1961, capacity was restricted to between 450 and 550 the following year. This was a more manageable crowd that resulted in 'greater freedom of movement, more efficient servicing, and more satisfying mingling.'¹¹⁸ By 1971, most of the chairs and tables were removed, and the additional space further encouraged 'an animated scene.'¹¹⁹ With the president and committee acting as hosts, the event was a celebration of Tattersall's, although its end-of-year scheduling and inclusion of members' partners was also a likely factor in the decline of the smoke concerts.

Other events were introduced to attract members back into the Club in the evenings, such as the weekly Tuesday Grill Night which took place from 1960. The members-only function was initially staged around snooker competitions, but its primary selling point was the good quality, affordable grills and oysters offered between 6 and 7.15pm.¹²⁰ By the late 1970s, a regular and steady members' presence on a week night was important at a time when attendances were becoming virtually non-existent on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.¹²¹ Several Welcome to New Member nights also took place in the early 1960s in

¹¹⁶ Clelland, 1991.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.; TCAR 1961 and 1962.

¹¹⁹ TCAR 1971

¹²⁰ Clelland, 1991.

¹²¹ TCAR 1961, 1964 and 1977.

the form of Committee Room drinks, and quickly became a regular feature.¹²² These were complemented with Getting To Know You evenings in 1969, which saw membership divided into fifteen vocational groups, with up to ten members from each category invited to attend. Over 600 members appeared at the five nights held across the year.¹²³ While the event emphasised the professional networking potential of Tattersall's, it also sought to prevent those from similar professions becoming too enclosed within the Club.¹²⁴

New evening events, especially those held weekly, were also important in adapting to societal change and maintaining members' interest in the Club. In the 1960s, the Brisbane Club Committee expressed similar concerns to Tattersall's regarding population movement to the suburbs and its effect on evening attendances. Both institutions were increasingly becoming solely viewed as luncheon clubs.¹²⁵ More members were indeed living upon the city's developing fringes, while new freeways and improved road infrastructure had increased travel to coastal regions north and south of Brisbane at the weekends.¹²⁶ Motor vehicle registration in Queensland had also risen from 418,600 in 1960 to over one million by 1975.¹²⁷ The effect was compounded by new drink-driving laws introduced in the state during the 1960s, and in 1968 Tattersall's even blamed falling evening attendances on the recent advent of breathalyser tests.¹²⁸ The problem was exacerbated further by increased traffic and parking regulations, in addition to the removal of the tram system under Lord Mayor Clem Jones in April 1969.¹²⁹ By the following year, poor after-work trade had become an accepted fact, as drinking habits in the city continued to change with 'the tendency of the individual to frequent the suburban hotels and clubs.'¹³⁰ Ultimately, it was not enough to simply be open each evening in an age of increased vehicle usage (and the subsequent city restrictions), in addition to the growing number of suburban homes, hotels and bottle shops, as well as the introduction of television in Queensland in 1959. The consistent draw

¹²² Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 16.

¹²³ TCAR 1969.

¹²⁴ Clelland, 1991.

¹²⁵ Thomis, *Brisbane Club*, 27.

¹²⁶ Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity and David Symons, *Made in Queensland: A New History* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2009), 147.

¹²⁷ Ian Cameron, *125 Years of State Public Works in Queensland 1850-1984* (Bowen Hills: Boolarong Publications, 1989), 229 cited in Fitzgerald et al., *Made in Queensland*, 147.

¹²⁸ TCAR 1968.

¹²⁹ TCAR 1967; Fitzgerald et al., *Made in Queensland*, 148.

¹³⁰ TCAR 1969.

of evening events such as the dinner-dances and grill nights – as well as the maintenance of a near capacity Dining Hall at lunchtime – was therefore vital in counteracting the effect of such negative trends and sustaining a good level of performance for the Club.

vii) Hospitality

Through its functions, lunches and refined premises, Tattersall's offered a high level of hospitality to its members and guests, though this was often extended even further. Visiting sports teams – such as the English and Canadian footballers in 1904 and 1924, or the Victorian Lacrosse Team in 1930 – were regularly welcomed into the Club and frequently made honorary members, as were visiting southern bookmakers for much of the twentieth century.¹³¹ A worldwide reciprocal list was also steadily built up from the 1960s with clubs whose members were 'most compatible and hospitable,' which enabled them to utilise the facilities at Tattersall's (and vice-versa for the Club's own members).¹³² By 1983, there were forty-eight affiliated overseas clubs – including the East India Devonshire Club in London, the Tanglin Club in Singapore and the New York Athletic Club in the US – alongside seven within Australia.¹³³ In addition to visiting sportsmen and reciprocal members, the Club also extended its courtesy to various celebrities, military personnel and politicians.

An early example of the Club's hospitality concerned Ada Reeve, the renowned British vaudeville artist, who was welcomed into Tattersall's in September 1917. Such an invitation was afforded in honour of her exertions on behalf of the Anzac Buffet, a service centre for Australian soldiers in London facing closure that year. Reeve was determined to save the centre – raising £800 in Queensland alone – and members 'liberally subscribed' to her efforts (which also included collecting funds for the Red Cross).¹³⁴ Reeve, who was later labelled an asset to the British Empire by Australian Prime Minister William Hughes, was presented with a gold medal at the Club and awarded honorary life membership. When thanking members, she told them that it was 'quicker to raise £1,000 from the bookies and sporting fraternity of Tattersall's Club than any bank in the world.'¹³⁵ The event tied-in with the Club's charitable causes throughout the war, from its Settling Day donations towards

¹³¹ TCM 1924; *Tattersall's Club Magazine*, July 1930; Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 99.

¹³² Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 23.

¹³³ TCAR 1983.

¹³⁴ TCAR 1918.

¹³⁵ Conway, 1958.

the Patriotic Fund to the £2,000 invested in the 1918 Peace Loan.¹³⁶ It was therefore fitting that Reeve's contribution was commemorated at the expense of Tattersall's male-only tradition – she was apparently the first woman to stand on the floor of the Club.¹³⁷

Another famous occasion in Tattersall's history saw the Club host eminent Australian aviator Bert Hinkler. After his world-renowned, fifteen-day solo flight from England to Australia – smashing the previous record of twenty-eight days – Hinkler arrived in Brisbane on 6 March 1928 and was afforded a warm-hearted reception at the Club the next day. Member Lennie Lee drove Hinkler in from the airport in an Armstrong-Siddeley, the only such tonneau-type car in Brisbane at the time.¹³⁸ Crowds thronged to the entrance of Tattersall's as Hinkler was welcomed by 500 members and a crowded gallery of women upstairs. A ceremony took place on the Committee Room balcony, overlooking the crowd that had gathered on Edward Street, as State Premier William McCormack presented Hinkler with a cheque for over £260 on behalf of members. During the flight, Hinkler had carried a mini-bottle of Dewar's scotch whisky, which he signed and presented to President Ranson (who was also a representative for the Scottish distiller). Castlemaine Perkins provided a gift case to the Club that still displays the bottle today, although evaporation has reduced its contents by half.¹³⁹

Three years later, Tattersall's received British Captain Charles Scott, who had completed the same flight within nine days. Scott was a guest of President Hall and the Committee at a well-attended lunch, at which Hall expressed the Club's privilege 'to have as their guest a wonderful and distinguished aviator whose record was now being chronicled throughout the world.'¹⁴⁰ Remarkable aviation was again celebrated in June 1934, when it was unanimously decided to award Jean Batten honorary life membership in the wake of her successful England-Australia solo flight.¹⁴¹ Batten and Reeve incidentally hold the distinction of being the only females present on the Tattersall's Life Membership Board – they also both technically remain the only ever female 'members' of the Club.

¹³⁶ TCAR 1918.

¹³⁷ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 17.

¹³⁸ *Tattler*, 11 October 1982.

¹³⁹ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 8.

¹⁴⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 16 April 1931, 10.

¹⁴¹ *Telegraph*, 18 June 1934, 11.



Fig. 37. The case exhibiting Bert Hinkler's gift to Tattersall's in 1928, which remains on display at the Club today. The inscription reads:

'This bottle of Dewar's Whisky was carried from England to Australia by Squadron Leader Bert Hinkler in his plane on his historic flight from England and delivered by him personally to Dewar's Representative in Tattersall's Club (R. P. Ranson President) on the 7th March 1928. Presented to Tattersall's Club by Castlemaine Perkins Limited.'

(Photo: Dr Michael O'Shea, 2014).

The Club's hospitality towards military personnel, meanwhile, was at its most prominent during World War Two. Queensland was the Allied staging zone during the South West Pacific campaign (1941-45), and when the final US base closed in early 1947 it was estimated that nearly 2.3 million American troops had passed through Brisbane.¹⁴² In April 1942, Secretary Philip Stewart offered honorary membership at Tattersall's to all visiting US forces. Although it was a magnanimous gesture, the decision soon proved problematic. While bar profits rose – in one month alone they soared from £651 to £1,955 – licencing laws were routinely broken in the serving of alcohol after hours, while there was also a rise in open betting within the Club.¹⁴³ By June, over two-dozen bottled spirits were being sold per day, but this only resulted in a stock crisis and the Committee subsequently limited sales to one bottle per fortnight for members only. This did not deter one elderly member, who asked permission to continue purchasing regular bottles of brandy 'because of his health.'¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Evans, *History of Queensland*, 187.

¹⁴³ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 172.

¹⁴⁴ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 17.

In July 1942, General MacArthur – supreme commander of the South West Pacific Area – established his headquarters opposite Tattersall’s on Edward Street, with over 100,000 servicemen in Brisbane at the time.¹⁴⁵ As further divisions moved north from Melbourne, all honorary membership cards were reluctantly cancelled in late August. Even the new members’ list closed for the first time the following month.¹⁴⁶ Tattersall’s remained busy, however, with servicemen often blocking the stairwell, while the supply of draught beer proved more durable. ‘Lots of Americans came in as guests of members,’ remembered Bill Boyan. ‘They were always made to feel welcome of course, and there was an air of mutual friendship.’¹⁴⁷ The mood inside the Club contrasted with the outright resentment that was, at times, witnessed elsewhere. This predominantly centred around a local sense of inferiority among young males, who felt that the Americans received more praise for the frontline Allied success, and also believed – perhaps more damagingly – that ‘the richer, smarter-looking and romantically savvy “Yank” invariably “got the girl”’ (some 7,000 women ultimately left Brisbane as war brides).¹⁴⁸ While this rose to the surface most flagrantly at the ‘Battle of Brisbane’ in late November 1942, Tattersall’s could reflect upon a concerted effort to be as welcoming as possible throughout the war, as Longhurst concluded: ‘The Club’s reputation for camaraderie and hospitality – and the occasional covert bet – was spread to the far corners of Australia and the world of the great days and evenings at Brisbane Tattersall’s from 1942 to 1945, however hard it was to buy a drink!’¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, such as approach did not end with World War Two. When officers of US Navy ships in port were afforded honorary membership at the Club in early 1962, for example, the Commanding Officer wrote to the Club on departure: ‘We were singularly impressed with Tattersall’s: its dignity, its décor – and the atmosphere of warm friendship among its members.’¹⁵⁰ The Club’s hospitality did, however, begin to extend more noticeably to politicians and those in governorship as the twentieth century progressed. Many visited of their own accord: Prime Minister Sir Arthur Fadden, for example, frequented the Club while

¹⁴⁵ David Horner, 'MacArthur, Douglas (1880–1964)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 24 August 2017, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macarthur-douglas-10890/text19337>.

¹⁴⁶ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 172.

¹⁴⁷ Boyan, 1991.

¹⁴⁸ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 194-5.

¹⁴⁹ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 179.

¹⁵⁰ *Tattler*, 19 April 1962.

in office in 1941 and became an honorary member thereafter. Boyan recalled Fadden as ‘a great raconteur who kept members regaled on Friday mornings with some great stories.’¹⁵¹ State Governor Sir John Lavarack (1946-57) often played snooker at the Club and later became a patron, while his successors Sir Colin Hannah and Sir James Ramsey were also frequent visitors.¹⁵² Clem Jones, Lord Mayor of Brisbane between 1961 and 1975, was a long-term honorary member who was ever present and a prominent personality within the Backseaters and Bowls sub-clubs. Tattersall’s also initiated the Governor’s Dinner to both mark the arrival of a new governor and celebrate their term upon departure. In March 1963, for instance, a dinner was held to farewell Sir Henry Abel Smith, while in 1972 the event welcomed Sir Colin Hannah.¹⁵³ The At Homes also invited state governors such as Sir Alan Mansfield, who attended with his wife in 1966.¹⁵⁴ Whereas Tattersall’s once sought such dignitaries at its race meetings, they were now often present inside the Club, which demonstrated its wider social influence and status as a respected Brisbane institution.

Indeed, by 1983 the Club’s honorary membership extended to members of state cabinet, supreme court judges, chiefs of the armed services, top public servants such as the police commissioner, the American and British counsels, and newspaper sports editors. The nature of membership generally was alluded to in a *Courier-Mail* article that year, which claimed that a survey of the 600 in the Dining Hall across Thursday and Friday would read like a ‘Who’s Who’ of Brisbane.¹⁵⁵ Graeme Fry, who joined Tattersall’s in 1978, was certainly aware of its influential nature during visits as a guest of his manager throughout his waiting period. Fry met leading solicitors, chief tax collectors, leaders of the clothing industry, and ex-premiers of the city who all, unsurprisingly, made an impression. ‘The general conversation for someone like me was mind-boggling,’ recalls Fry. ‘They knew exactly what was going on in town, they knew the “goss” – and they knew things that you wouldn’t know how they got to know them.’¹⁵⁶ Alongside its esteemed standing within the community, the sense of welcoming hospitality and camaraderie was clearly still felt throughout the Club whether among its members, visitors or distinguished guests.

¹⁵¹ *Tattler*, Spring 1999.

¹⁵² Longhurst, *Friendship*, 187.

¹⁵³ TCAR 1963 and 1972.

¹⁵⁴ TCAR 1966.

¹⁵⁵ *Courier-Mail*, 15 October 1983, 29.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Graeme Fry, conducted by the author, 18 September 2015.



Fig. 38. A well-attended governor's dinner held in the Dining Hall, c.late-1970s / early-1980s. (Photo: Tattersall's Club archives).

It should be noted that the Club's relations with the state's leading figures were not always so cordial. The issue of blackballing within Queensland clubs, for example, became highly topical following controversial legislation introduced under Premier Vince Gair in early 1955. Under the new Liquor Act, any club holding a liquor licence had to admit every applicant who was eligible under its written rules. If a person was refused membership of a club then they could appeal, and the club in question would have to justify its decision to the satisfaction of a tribunal.¹⁵⁷ It was believed that Gair championed the cause after two of his friends were rejected by two of the state's premier clubs. At the Brisbane Club, a member had taken exception to the applicant's political background and rallied support against his entry, while the Queensland Club had, according to Gair, blackballed one of the state's

¹⁵⁷ *Sun-Herald* (Sydney), 20 March 1955, 50.

leading judges.¹⁵⁸ The new bill threw open an intriguing debate: blackballing had, after all, always been embedded in club culture, and a club's objections were not previously legally definable. In February 1955, Tattersall's President Albert Sakzewski complained that the legislation 'appears to strike at the very roots of our heritage,' and added that 'it takes from the individual the freedom to which he is justly entitled, and interferes with something which we believe is a domestic matter for any club.'¹⁵⁹ Gair countered that Tattersall's was not as democratic as it made out, given that its committee could reject a candidate at the discretion of two committeemen and, ultimately, had the final say on who was admitted.¹⁶⁰

Several political opponents of Gair, who led the Queensland Labor Party, supported the clubs' right to blackball. Alan Munro, the Liberal Party Deputy Leader in state parliament, argued that a club was a 'home away from home where people with similar interests and outlooks could meet together as friends.' The state legislation, in his opinion, was a socialistic foray into people's domestic affairs.¹⁶¹ The Liberal Leader, Kenneth Morris, was even more unequivocal, referring to the bill as 'one of the most personal and vicious pieces of class legislation ever introduced into a democratic country.'¹⁶² Relations between Gair and Tattersall's became even more strained when he openly accused the Club of practicing 'a ban against Jews and Lebanese born in Queensland.'¹⁶³ Naturally, both the allegations and the potential for forced membership created 'some uproar and deep-seated acrimony within the Club,' especially as Gair had enjoyed ordinary membership since 1947.¹⁶⁴ Such incidents appeared rare, however, in an era of otherwise eminent hospitality and relations.

It had, in fact, been clear for some time that the Club's welcoming atmosphere was simply a reverberation of its long-held penchant for friendship. In 1983, Secretary Clelland stressed that membership was open to 'any person who observes the ordinary tenets of friendship and compatibility,' and added that there was 'no religious, ethnic or colour bar.'¹⁶⁵ Of course, applicants needed a proposer, seconder and six referees to support their character,

¹⁵⁸ Thomis, *Brisbane Club*, 25; *Sun-Herald* (Sydney), 20 March 1955, 50.

¹⁵⁹ *Courier-Mail*, 24 February 1955.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Courier-Mail*, 25 February 1955.

¹⁶² *Courier-Mail*, 11 March 1955.

¹⁶³ *Sun-Herald*, 20 March 1955, 50.

¹⁶⁴ *Tattler*, 12 November 1980.

¹⁶⁵ *Courier-Mail*, 15 October 1983, 29.

but such a screening process helped to ensure that the Club's core values remained. It was unsurprising that the motto devised for Tattersall's in 1962 was *Amicitia Vita Est* – 'Friendship is Life' – a concept of Cicero that Gordon Cooper, then Classics Professor at UQ, had helped the Club to formulate.¹⁶⁶ The Committee agreed that it represented the very concept upon which Tattersall's was founded.¹⁶⁷ When Jack Delaney, who served as president between 1966 and 1971, was asked to reflect upon what he valued most across his fifty years of membership, his immediate answer spoke for many: 'The friendships and companionships that I made, and the very pleasant occasions we had together.'¹⁶⁸ Claude Jacobs, who had joined in 1948, added: 'I don't know how you say it, but no one seems to be standing on their own having a drink. If there was, you'd invite them to have a drink with you.'¹⁶⁹ The secretary also played an important part in this process. 'I followed a policy that nobody was ever able to say that they had to sit on their own,' Clelland recalled. 'I sat on my own on the side most days, and they were always welcome to come and sit with me.'¹⁷⁰

Such a warm, sociable climate was further assisted by the long-term nature of the staff and leadership at the Club. Clelland was secretary for twenty-five years, and several of his predecessors had also provided lengthy service. Philip Stewart, for example, ran the Club for seventeen years between 1930 and 1947, while the likes of Maurice Baldwin (1906-14), Robert Gillespie (1923-30) and Robert Mullin (1947-54) all served the best part of a decade each.¹⁷¹ Staff members including Ray Conway (1915-58) spent most of their lives at Tattersall's, while Jim Croydon – who joined as 'office boy' in 1926 before moving to the bar under Conway's stewardship – retired in 1975 having provided forty-nine years of service. In 1983, Tattersall's long-term staff still included librarian Alice Lacey (who had joined in 1953), bar stewardess Marie Hickey (1955) and dining room supervisor Jean Andrews (1957).¹⁷² This was alongside committeemen who often served between ten and twenty years, while presidential terms – though limited to five years following Healy's record stand between 1932 and 1953 – still ensured a gradual turnover that provided stability. In addition to staff

¹⁶⁶ *Tattler*, Summer 2012.

¹⁶⁷ *Tattler*, 27 September 1972.

¹⁶⁸ Delaney, 1991.

¹⁶⁹ Jacobs, 1991.

¹⁷⁰ Clelland, 1991.

¹⁷¹ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 242-3.

¹⁷² Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 9-17.

and leadership, the actual membership of the Club was often also long-standing. In 1962, a senior member category was introduced that waived fees for those who had been members of the Club for thirty-five years or more, and by 1983 over 400 had been elected.¹⁷³

Tattersall's was therefore an environment that possessed real continuity and, given the overriding characteristic of friendship, it was easy for new members – of which there was a gradual influx of between 100 and 200 from 1960 – to assimilate alongside the regular flurry of guests. A sense of continuity was also evident in the fact that sons of members were given priority on the waiting list from 1960, and subsequently accounted for one in every four new members. It is fair to assume that they possessed a strong understanding of the philosophy of Tattersall's, just like seemingly everyone else who came into contact with the Club. It was indicative that even Vince Gair, who had clashed with the Club so vehemently in the 1950s, remained consistent in his patronage of Tattersall's and was always happy to recount his vast political experiences to an audience of members. Upon his death in 1980, the Club mourned that it had lost one of its best-known identities who, like so many others, had remained a friend until the end.¹⁷⁴

Part One: Conclusion

Tattersall's Club was born out of an emerging thoroughbred industry in Queensland. Its establishment in 1883 followed repeated calls in Brisbane for an institution to provide a regulated environment for wagering – along the lines of the original Tattersall's subscription room model – as well as the growing need for a registry of bookmakers and a recognised body to arbitrate upon betting disputes. In addition to fulfilling these obligations, the Club also held its own race meetings, but became increasingly frustrated in its inability to secure appropriate dates. For an institution that was formed by racing enthusiasts, it was a natural step for Tattersall's to secure its own racecourse and, for a few years after the purchase of Deagon in 1899, it seemed destined to become a fully-fledged racing club. While this was not to be, the Club continued to service the industry and resumed racing at Eagle Farm.

¹⁷³ TCAR 1961-1983.

¹⁷⁴ TCAR 1960; *Courier-Mail*, 15 October 1983, 29; *Tattler*, 12 November 1980.

Tattersall's position as a betting and racing institution at the turn of the century was therefore clear, and it was unsurprisingly largely characterised by its bookmakers.

By 1983, however, President Bob Needham had declared that Tattersall's was 'a businessmen's club rather than a racing one' and, ultimately, such a transition was difficult to dispute.¹ Bookmaking membership had fallen significantly from the 100 or so that belonged to the Club in 1950 and, although twenty-five remained on the register, their eventual disappearance appeared inevitable. While the proliferation of SP betting within the Club's Arcade in the 1930s demonstrated a questionable adherence to social responsibility, it nonetheless emphasised the strong relationship between Tattersall's, racing and gambling which had since deteriorated. In addition, despite being iconic feature of the Club for much of the twentieth century, Settling Day had become a shadow of its former self, while the Club's arbitration was very rarely called upon. While an overall decline was irrefutable, however, some important links to racing had endured. Tattersall's had held between three and five race meetings virtually every year since the early 1900s, a longevity that was testament to both the Club's continuing relationship with the thoroughbred industry, as well as the sport's popularity among its membership. Indeed, while the membership may have diversified, many remained well-informed when it came to the races at the weekend.²

Away from racing, a notable trait of Tattersall's from its earliest days was a desire to provide the best for a growing membership base, not least in successive committee's attempts to upgrade the Club premises – which culminated in the custom-built clubhouse in 1926. Prior to construction, the Club had voiced its desire to become one of the leading sporting clubs in Australia, yet when the new building was unveiled it was clear that Tattersall's was in possession of some of the finest premises of any club in the country.³ With its inclusion of domestic lounges, recreation and reading rooms, and a billiard parlour and bar, Tattersall's became more closely identifiable with the traditional gentlemen's club. Not only was the clubhouse practical for members, it was also a magnificent architectural addition to the developing city. With its central location, Tattersall's was also able to cater for an increasing number of city professionals which further diversified its membership body. This was

¹ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 1.

² Fry, 2015.

³ TCM 1923.

evident at the Club's luncheon, which was already being described as an 'institution' by the Club's magazine in 1930, and became a truly defining feature of Tattersall's following the addition of the Dining Hall in 1939.⁴ Following many years of change, the Club had developed a permanent and enduringly impressive structure as its home, and the premises became indelibly associated with the membership experience. The Club's ability to maintain comparatively affordable membership fees, meanwhile, owed much to the continuous financial contribution provided by its arcade, which also formed part of the premises.

Above all other changes and consistencies that developed within Tattersall's Club during its first 100 years was the enduring trait of friendship. From its earliest days, the Club had possessed a strong social component. This could be dependent upon racing activities, but companionship was also shared over drinking and dining, the billiard tables, and early events such as the smoke concerts – which were also typical activities of the traditional gentlemen's club. From the 1930s, camaraderie was also found within the bowls, cricket and golf subsidiary clubs, and by Tattersall's centenary the sub-clubs could reflect upon fifty years of benevolence and competition (along with the later establishment of the tennis club, and the continuing popularity of billiards and snooker, the sub-clubs also helped to maintain the Club's sporting identity). While the daily Club luncheon gradually became more of a defining feature of Tattersall's than Settling Day, both represented the Club across different eras when it was at its busiest – and when its sociability was at its finest. An increasing variety of functions also brought the membership closer together, while several – such as the Dinner Dance – welcomed members' guests into the Club where they were also afforded a high level of courtesy. Indeed, the Club's hospitality was a further showcase of its friendship and was extended to various sportsmen, celebrities, military personnel and numerous state leaders and politicians. This welcoming, hospitable environment was further assisted by the long-term nature of membership, staff and leadership at the Club.

Ultimately, Tattersall's was able to successfully evolve throughout its first century of existence. While the Club was built upon thoroughbred racing, it had since developed into more of a social and professional gentlemen's institution. The Club retained an association with the sport, but its survival had become more reliant upon other factors. 'The nature of

⁴ *Tattersall's Club Magazine*, December 1930.

the Club has changed,' reflected Bill Boyan in 1991, after sixty years of membership. 'But basically, of course, it has stayed the same and lived by its motto.'⁵ Beyond 'Friendship is Life,' the ethos of Tattersall's was perhaps best articulated by President Trevor Henderson in 1965, who described it as: 'An awareness of the past, yet a taste for the present and an abiding trust in the future...It is above all an ever present and sincere desire to extend and receive goodwill and camaraderie one to the other, in an atmosphere of happiness.'⁶ After a century of change and continuity, such sentiment would remain imperative towards the future success and survival of Tattersall's as it entered its 101st year in 1984.

⁵ Boyan, 1991.

⁶ TCAR 1964.

Part Two

The Tattersall's Club Redevelopment (1984 – 1997)

4) Process

'The present building, opened in 1926 and expanded with the Dining Hall in 1939, remains not only architecturally beautiful but thoroughly utilitarian, and members are offered a wide range of amenities in comfortable surroundings.'¹ These words were written by President Bob Needham in celebration of the Club's centenary, and hardly suggested any need for change. Within a few years, however, Tattersall's embarked on an ambitious scheme that would result in the substantial redevelopment of its premises between 1990 and 1997.

Hall and Prentice had originally speculated that the 1926 building could accommodate up to 4,000 members following its opening, yet this appeared optimistic.² The Committee first imposed a limit on membership of 1,300 in 1943, and while this was partly due to World War Two and the associated restrictions on supplies, it was also a concession to the spatial limitations of the clubhouse.³ In 1970, the Committee declared its belief that Tattersall's had almost reached capacity, with a membership of over 2,600 and a waiting period of some fifteen years.⁴ The premises had received extensions in 1939 and 1949, but little development had taken place thereafter and facilities were beginning to stretch. The kitchen, for example, was under considerable strain as the Club luncheon continued to grow in popularity. Upon installation in 1939, it was only expected to meet requirements for ten years, and although President Healy spoke of using the extensions for a new kitchen a decade later, nothing materialised despite the obvious need.⁵ Membership growth, meanwhile, was gradual but considerable. The 2,000 members in 1950 had almost doubled to just under 4,000 by 1983, with a further 4,000 on the Club's extensive waiting list.⁶

Potential extensions had been mooted during this period. Long-term Committeeman (1988-2003) and Treasurer (1990-98) Graeme Fry recalls Claude Jacobs wanting to extend the premises during his time on the Committee in the 1960s, when he tried to secure property on the corner of Edward and Queen Streets. 'He agonised over losing £100,' recalls Fry. 'He

¹ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 2.

² *Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1927, 5.

³ Boyan, *Tattersall's Club Centenary*, 6.

⁴ TCAR 1970.

⁵ *Telegraph*, 26 June 1939, 18; *Courier-Mail*, 1 February 1949, 3.

⁶ TCAR 1983.

took an option over it, and at that stage he took it to the Committee – who knocked him back.⁷ Ron Clelland recalled committee discussions regarding the possible purchase of the Grand Central Hotel property attached to the Club’s Queen Street façade, which was on sale in the 1970s. ‘The argument was that it was wonderful property,’ he said, ‘but how were we going to finance it all? The killer to the whole proposition was that we had to buy it with a purpose in mind as to what were we going to do. Were we going to become residential? Were we going to extend our kitchen area?’⁸ As it was, Tattersall’s celebrated its one-hundredth year with little sign that any significant transformation was impending. Given the occasion, Needham’s positive assessment was understandable, though even he acknowledged the following year that the Club did ‘not intend to stand still as any attempt to do that can only lead to a lowering of standards.’⁹

At the opening of its custom-built premises in 1926, Tattersall’s had proclaimed itself as one of the best clubs in the Commonwealth. President Ranson even noted that some people had remarked, almost disparagingly, that Tattersall’s was twenty years ahead of the times. ‘But I would prefer to be twenty years ahead,’ he retorted, ‘than twenty years behind the times.’¹⁰ By 1984, it was apparent that Tattersall’s had fallen behind the times, and that change was necessary. As the following discussion outlines, the Club duly pushed for progress as it formulated and executed its most significant undertaking in over half-a-century.

i) The need for change

In the mid-1980s, Committee discussion gathered pace to expand and modernise the Club’s premises and operation. This coincided with the arrival of Paul Jones as General Manager (formerly Secretary) in February 1984, who shared in the vision of Needham’s successor Leo Williams. President Williams alluded to the need for change at the 1986 Annual Meeting, when he referred to the shifting commercial environment surrounding Tattersall’s. ‘With the opening of the Wintergarden complex and the development of the Hilton project next door, the Tattersall’s Arcade is becoming a little dated and shabby,’ he remarked.¹¹ This was in addition to the Queen Street Mall, which opened in 1982, and the Myer Centre that had

⁷ Fry, 2015.

⁸ Clelland, 1991.

⁹ *Tattler*, 1 June 1984.

¹⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1927, 5.

¹¹ *Tattler*, 3 March 1986.

followed in 1988. The Brisbane Club had also redeveloped its arcade along Isles Lane in 1965 to provide modern shops and office spaces, and in doing so had invested in its asset and protected 'a steady source of income.'¹² Williams stressed the importance of the Arcade as a major source of revenue that, along with the investments it funded, enabled the Club to provide low-cost services to its members. 'In order to preserve and maximise our rental position, it is obvious that our rental income must be protected,' he wrote.¹³

The Committee initially asked the Kern Corporation – one of Queensland's major construction enterprises – to submit a proposal to update the mall frontage, the Arcade shops, and the Club's library wing.¹⁴ However, a wider assessment ultimately took place in relation to the lift, kitchen, fire escapes, offices, staff rooms, private dining facilities, and ladies' facilities within the Club. Kern Corporation's solution was additional amenities and improvements that would cost around \$22 million. Judging by Williams' rhetoric at the 1987 Annual Meeting, the Club was uncertain how best to proceed. 'Clearly, we cannot afford that, and this Committee has no intention of putting the Club into debt,' he said.¹⁵ While noting that Tattersall's was asset-rich with its property, he also spoke of its cash limitations. 'Our cash and investments at around \$1.3 million look good but, in reality, do not afford the Club much margin to move in any direction – not that we need to,' he added. Although Williams noted that the Club 'copes extremely well in dealing with membership requirements in what we already have,' he stressed that it was at capacity with 4,450 members, and that the waiting list would continue to grow out of necessity.¹⁶ Ultimately, Kern's proposals were appropriate but unfeasible at the time and, while no firm decision regarding development was made, it was clear that potential costs were already a concern.

It was instead decided to try and secure additional property and, by the end of 1987, the Committee had considered several possibilities. Between the Club's properties facing Queen and Edward Streets, the corner consisted of buildings belonging to the New South Wales, Tasmanian, and Victorian governments, who each held tourist bureaus on the ground-floors. In September 1987, the costs and financing behind the possible purchase of the NSW

¹² Thomis, *Brisbane Club*, 38.

¹³ TCAR 1985.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Tattler*, 4 March 1987.

¹⁶ Ibid.

building – which was, incidentally, Ascot Chambers – were studied. Fry, then Club Auditor, suggested that a \$2.5 million long-term loan along with \$500,000 from investments might be enough. Such a purchase would need to satisfy both the NSW Government and its tourist commission, which wanted to retain a substantial amount of the proceeds in any sale. In addition, the Director of the NSW Property Management Unit was quick to raise the property value to \$3.5 million on account of the Club's interest. It was also proposed that Tattersall's might take a long-term lease of the site instead, though this option was quickly dismissed by the Committee.¹⁷ Such discussions were an early indicator of the complex and challenging negotiations that lay ahead for the Club and its desire to redevelop.

ii) Increasing membership fees

At the Annual Meeting in February 1988, the Committee explained that a lack of cash and an inability to service potential borrowings was inhibiting its plans to purchase additional property. It was decided to increase membership fees, and a proposal to amend the rules was distributed to members prior to the meeting. Described as more realistic, the planned increases were still substantial. For ordinary membership, annual subscription would rise from \$50 to \$250, while the entrance fee was to increase from \$250 to \$1,000.¹⁸ As they stood, however, the fees at Tattersall's were very low in comparison to clubs of similar stature. The Brisbane Club, for example, charged \$550 subscription with an entrance fee of \$600 at the time.¹⁹ Nonetheless, when the proposal was under Committee discussion, Sir James Killen warned his fellow committeemen of the risk being undertaken: 'Gentlemen, the hip pocket nerve is the most sensitive in the human body. After all my years in federal politics, I can assure you that this is going to cause terrible problems among the members.'²⁰

The Committee stressed to the membership that the fee was struck 'as the income necessary to meet anticipated expenditure on the existing building, together with any loan required to support property acquisition or reconstruction of the Healy Building.'²¹ It was argued that new facilities were paramount to the Club's future, alongside an arcade that urgently needed upgrading. The Committee added that present facilities 'cannot continue to

¹⁷ TCM 1987.

¹⁸ TCAR 1987.

¹⁹ TCM 1988.

²⁰ Interview with Paul Jones, conducted by the author, 27 August 2015.

²¹ 'Tattersall's Committee Memorandum to members,' February 1988 (document).

be provided from within the existing building,' which suggested that it was not possible for the Club to continue without expansion. There were also vague references to by-laws and statutory requirements regarding current building space and fire escapes, but perhaps the biggest mystery concerned an alleged fire that took place inside the Arcade. This supposedly occurred 'in the last twelve months' – i.e. 1987 – though according to Williams' address at the 1986 Annual Meeting, the fire had been lit by vandals in 1985.²² In any case, it was probably calculated conjecture to illustrate just how vulnerable the Club and Arcade were within an outdated infrastructure. It also highlighted just how desperate the Committee was to secure the members' approval for a rise in membership fees that was integral to its plans and, it was believed, the very future of Tattersall's. The Committee also stressed that, after a comparatively idle fifty-year period, it was time to take 'a major step forward' just as its predecessors had done in 1926.²³

When it came to collect the vote, Williams showed considerable charm and nous. 'We had a proper division,' recalls Jones, 'so it was no counting hands – it was too important.' Williams asked those against the motion to go through to the Dining Hall. 'Which was dry,' explains Jones, 'and not to put too fine a point on it, but the meeting had gone on for a little while.' The President then asked those in favour to form up along the bar and, of course: it opened, the drinks flowed, and the motion was passed. 'Only Leo Williams would have got away with that, definitely.'²⁴ The result was crucial for Tattersall's in both its timing and impact. While the Club was not losing money – annual profit over the previous five years ranged between \$85,000 and \$210,000 – its income was insufficient to support any real advancement.²⁵ Following the approval, subscription income rose from \$213,000 in 1987 to just under \$870,000 in 1988 – a substantial increase of 276%.²⁶ Beyond its financial impact, the vote also cleared the hurdle of opposition from within the Club, following press headlines that had proclaimed 'Fee rise irks members of Tatts Club.'²⁷ 'The only level of opposition we got was when we had to put the fees up,' confirms John Foote, who was on the Committee throughout the redevelopment. 'We had a big meeting that created a bit of a stir, but they

²² Ibid; TCAR 1985.

²³ *Tattler*, 3 March 1986.

²⁴ Jones, 2015.

²⁵ TCAR 1983-1987.

²⁶ TCAR 1987 and 1988.

²⁷ *Courier-Mail*, 23 January 1988, 14.

got it through.²⁸ Within two months some 250 members had resigned, and while most did not cite the increase as a specific cause, it was telling that so many suddenly felt they had ‘no use for the Club.’²⁹ With a now 5,000-strong waiting list seemingly undeterred, however, Tattersall’s remained in a commanding position from which to proceed.

iii) Establishing a two-stage plan

The Committee quickly set about formulating a clear redevelopment plan. A building advisory sub-committee was established around architect (and member) Trevor Reddacliff to provide expert advice. Reddacliff had been Project Manager of Harry Seidler’s Riverside Centre – the first international standard building in Brisbane’s CBD – and would go on to redevelop the World Expo 1988 site on South Bank.³⁰ In March 1988, the sub-committee received a presentation from Phillips Smith Conwell, the Club’s architects, that proposed replacing the Healy Building with a six-storey structure. The advisability of purchasing all or part of the NSW, Tasmanian and Victorian buildings was also discussed. By June, the sub-committee – which also included Jones and Committeeman John Maclean – had met with representatives from each site to establish both the possibility of sale and an asking price. Negotiations were positive – each building appeared purchasable – though the complexities of dealing with government entities were again apparent. Although state tourism bureaus were being phased out, there was a reluctance among each government to sell by private treaty – due perhaps, in the opinion of Jones, to the risk of seemingly ‘working on the old-boys network.’³¹ This was an accusation that increasingly confronted men’s clubs throughout the later twentieth century, as it was often suggested that they exercised significant political and economic power behind closed doors owing to the personal contact between influential members. In 1981, for example, the former Labor Premier of South Australia Don Dunstan remarked: ‘It used to be said, and it wasn’t said idly, that South Australia was ruled from the Adelaide Club, just as Victoria was from the Melbourne Club.’³²

²⁸ Interview with John Foote, conducted by the author, 16 March 2016.

²⁹ TCM 1988.

³⁰ ‘Obituary: Vale Trevor Reddacliff,’ accessed 21 May 2016, <http://architectureau.com/articles/obituary-11/>.

³¹ Jones, 2015.

³² John Playford, “The Adelaide Club: Myth and Reality,” *Quadrant* (July 1981) cited in Marilyn T. Rafter, “Carawah Women’s Club – A Case Study” (Research Report, University of Queensland, 1987), 77.

By the close of 1988, NSW had decided to go to auction with Victoria likely to follow, while Tasmania was apparently uninterested in selling. Reddacliff believed that, if financially viable, it would be best to purchase all three properties at auction to avoid retaining the respective governments as tenants.³³ The Committee announced at the Annual Meeting in January 1989 that it favoured amalgamating the three adjoining properties and felt 'obliged to pursue it until its conclusion.' It was also confirmed that, following a suggestion from Jones, architect Robin Gibson had been brought in to provide input at the design stage in association with Phillips Smith Conwell.³⁴ Gibson is credited as 'the man who helped turn Brisbane's eyes towards its river.'³⁵ His firm was behind the Cultural Centre in South Bank, while his vision also transformed Queen Street into a pedestrian mall. With another leading architect on board, a belief that the three adjoining sites could be acquired, and sufficient funding in place, Tattersall's appeared suitably confident as the new decade approached.

The Victorian building went to auction on 1 June 1989 and provided an opportunity for the Club to acquire property for the first time since 1949. This tested the Committee's resolve, and an extraordinary meeting was called at noon on the day of sale after the building was passed in for \$2.65 million. Perhaps understandably, not every member of the Committee was in agreement as to the best course of action. Several committeemen believed that it was the Club's last chance to buy adjacent property, and favoured bidding up to \$3 million – by consensus what the Club could afford. Others felt that if Tattersall's could not purchase all three government buildings, then there was little point in acquiring the Victorian site alone. Bob Templeton was particularly against the possible purchase – he felt that the Committee had lost sight of its original objective, which was to secure the fire escape provisions and upgrade the kitchen, office and dining facilities. Fry also felt that purchasing the building would not serve the Club's needs, while such a move would also incur debt.³⁶

The Committee was clearly in a state of both disagreement and uncertainty as to the Club's plans and direction. In the end, President Williams declared that he was happy with what Tattersall's already had. Like others on the Committee, he also questioned the valuation of

³³ TCM 1988.

³⁴ TCAR 1988.

³⁵ 'Obituary: Robin Gibson,' accessed 18 July 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-31/robin-gibson-brisbane-queensland-architect-designed-qpac-dies/5352028>.

³⁶ TCM 1989.

the Victorian building. It was decided not to proceed with the plans of purchase and focus instead upon the redevelopment of the Healy Building and the Arcade. After several years of protracted discussions with valuers, lawyers, financiers, quantity surveyors and property consultants – not to mention representatives of the three state governments – it appeared that an amalgamation was unachievable. Both the Victorian and NSW buildings were ultimately sold at auction to the Advance Bank for \$5 million and \$3.25 million respectively. Gibson and Partners subsequently drew up plans for the Healy Building – including two levels of retail, expenditure of \$16 million and a construction period of fourteen months – but the Committee immediately deemed these as unacceptable.³⁷

As a single complete project was beyond the Club's financial capacity, a more realistic two-stage development plan was presented to members at the Annual Meeting in January 1990. The first phase primarily concerned the Arcade. This had appeared relatively side-lined in recent discussions, but it was always at the crux of a redevelopment that hinged upon its successful rejuvenation. This first phase required an outlay of around \$5 million, with work to commence as early as possible that year. Upon its completion and payment, a second phase would then be undertaken. Although plans were provisional, it would involve the erection of a new structure over the Healy Building, and provide new dining and function rooms, kitchen facilities and a new library.³⁸ This phase carried an estimated cost of \$10 million, but the Committee believed that with the increased revenue from a renovated arcade alongside the annual profit from operations, the project was financially viable.

Williams stood down in 1990 having served his five-year term. The President's desire to progress Tattersall's had been obvious and, with the able advice and support of the Club's leadership and acquired expertise, the redevelopment had finally begun to take shape. 'When Leo proposed it, to a man everyone supported it as far as I remember,' recalls Foote.³⁹ Significantly, Williams had also commissioned Jones to undertake two tours of private clubs across South-East Asia, the USA, and the UK and Ireland in 1985 and 1987. In addition to establishing new reciprocal relations, the tours highlighted the need for change at the Club. The Hong Kong Club had already ceased affiliation in April 1984 on account of

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Foote, 2016.

the comparatively limited facilities at Tattersall's.⁴⁰ 'Both of those tours convinced me beyond any reasonable doubt that we needed to provide better amenities for our members, as we were well short of world standards,' confirms Jones.⁴¹ Ultimately, an achievable two-phase plan had been formulated to reach such a standard, and Williams' successor – Lloyd Holdway – could begin his presidency with a defined project underway (Holdway was, incidentally, also the first president under the new three-year terms introduced in 1990).

To fund Stage One, \$2.1 million was borrowed from the National Australia Bank (NAB), while the remaining \$2.9 million was met from existing Club funds. The rising value of Tattersall's and its land throughout the 1980s had placed the Club in a strong position. In 1982, Tattersall's carried a net worth of \$824,000 but this rose substantially to \$3.1 million the following year, primarily due to a surplus on the revaluation of its land of just over \$2.2 million.⁴² This was indicative of the rising land and property values throughout Brisbane's CBD. Further increases took place in 1986 and 1987, with the land's worth rising to \$9.4 million, while the Committee valued the buildings alone at over \$3.5 million (from an obviously dated previous valuation of \$155,000).⁴³ By 1990, the Club's freehold property was valued at \$14 million. Alongside accumulated funds of \$3.9 million – strengthened by the approved membership fee increase – and investments worth \$3 million, there was little trouble in negotiating the loan and meeting the outstanding balance.⁴⁴

Tattersall's obviously stood to benefit from upgrading the Arcade. Despite its weary state, the asset was already bringing in record revenue prior to the redevelopment. Between 1978 and 1981, its net income was \$113,000; in the four years preceding 1990, this figure had risen to over \$490,000.⁴⁵ The increase reflected the rising value of Tattersall's and its corresponding rental rates. A modern, upgraded arcade would not only protect this income but, it was hoped, improve upon it – and the Club could therefore fully capitalise upon a major resource. With income maximised, the Arcade could also crucially support the repayment of any substantial long-term borrowings for the more extensive Stage Two of the redevelopment. Having underpinned the Club's operations since 1926, the Arcade had now

⁴⁰ *Tattler*, March 1984.

⁴¹ Jones, 2015.

⁴² TCAR 1982 and 1983.

⁴³ TCAR 1987.

⁴⁴ TCAR 1990.

⁴⁵ TCAR 1978-1981 and 1986-1989.

become integral towards its future. Tattersall's expected a temporary downturn in rental income during renovation as shops vacated and new leases were negotiated but, encouragingly, the 1990 Annual Report expressed the expectation that a fully-let and upgraded Arcade would return a gross annual income of approximately \$1 million.⁴⁶

The '\$5m revamp for Tattersall's' was reported in the press in March 1990.⁴⁷ While the Arcade would be modernised, and its space increased by one-third with 900 square-metres of net-lettable area, there was a clear emphasis on retaining the character and heritage of the precinct. The design incorporated both the vaulted ceiling and Daphne Mayo friezes of old, while the new entrance to the Club (at the centre of the Arcade) would be in keeping with the 'old world charm' of Tattersall's, according to Jones.⁴⁸ Concept drawings were produced by Gibson and Partners, with architect Finn Rasmussen undertaking a lead role in designing and managing the construction. Both Jones and Rasmussen agreed that the old Queen Street entrance was symbolic of the need for a significant upgrade. Rasmussen compared entering the Club this way with 'going back in H. G. Wells' Time Machine.'⁴⁹ It certainly failed to reflect the grandeur of Tattersall's and was hardly inviting to the Arcade itself. 'You had to go through it to get to the Club on the corner, where the Arcade met as it does now,' confirms Jones. 'But there were no shops, and it really was a tunnel. It was tiled, and it looked like the entrance to a subway.'⁵⁰ The entrance also represented wasted space – Leo Williams had accurately referred to the laneway as 'dead land' in early 1986.⁵¹

The successful tender for Stage One was Hutchinson's, the same firm that had built the Dining Hall in 1939. Work began in October 1990 and was completed by the following June, with the official opening taking place on 6 August 1991 courtesy of Queensland Governor Sir Walter Campbell. Tattersall's now boasted a shopping centre with fourteen retail spaces, a new ground floor entrance to the Club, new foyers on the first and second levels, improved staff amenities, and new fire escapes as requisitioned. Aside from the necessary increase in space, the Arcade had also received a much-needed facelift. New plaster-glass ceilings, patterned terrazzo and marble floors, and polished brass trims ensured an ornate interior

⁴⁶ TCAR 1990.

⁴⁷ *Courier-Mail*, 9 March 1990.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Interview with Finn Rasmussen, conducted by Olivia Johnson and Brendan Walsh, 18 November 2013.

⁵⁰ Jones, 2015.

⁵¹ *Tattler*, 3 March 1896.

décor, complemented by the reproductions of the Mayo panels.⁵² It was a sharp, modern renewal of the original arcade. The new Club entrance featured polished marble floors, elevator façades, and generous use of silky oak wall-panelling and leadlight windows.⁵³ Gibson proudly reflected upon the overall success of the Stage One project in early 1993:

We have given Tattersall's a proper entrance on the ground level and established a rapport with the Club atmosphere upstairs. While the new arcade and entrance were not reverting to the past, they echo some of the sentiments of historical reference... From the point of view of the city, I believe our results have given this precinct an elegant space at street level which is both conducive to shopping and a convenient meeting place for Club members.⁵⁴



Fig. 39. (left) The Arcade's much-maligned (yet rather intriguing) former 'subway-style' entrance from Queen Street, c.1980; (right) the new entrance, which occupied a substantially larger area and boasted additional retail spaces, 2015. (Photos: Tattersall's Club archives and Alex Lister).

⁵² *City News* (Brisbane), 1 August 1991, 15.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Tattler*, Autumn 1993.



Fig. 40. The centre of the Arcade. Tattersall's entrance is to the right. (Photo: Justin Ng, 2016).



Fig. 41. The Arcade's modern interior, entered from Edward Street. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 2008).



Fig. 42. The upgraded entrance to Tattersall's Club within the Arcade. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1993).

In 1991, a loss of \$305,000 was recorded in property, mainly due to the compensation paid to disrupted lessees.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the Club remained profitable and entered 1992 with a vastly improved, fully-tenanted and operational Arcade. That year, the asset produced a profit of \$348,300 and the Committee expressed hope that the remaining \$1 million owed to the NAB would be paid off by December 1994.⁵⁶ In 1993, net revenue from the Arcade increased by over 100% to a then record \$792,000. Club trading also remained strong, while another rise in subscription fees – from \$250 to \$300 – was approved by the membership. Consequently, Tattersall's was able to pay off its debt one year earlier than planned.⁵⁷ It is fair to conclude, therefore, that Stage One of the redevelopment was a complete success.

iv) Property acquisition

Following the completion of a successful first phase, Tattersall's could turn its attention towards the more ambitious Stage Two. Financially, it would require significantly more expenditure and borrowing. Structurally, it appeared that redeveloping the Healy Building was the only option, though the potential for property acquisition had not disappeared completely. The precise utilities of the new extensions were unclear, and depended upon both the financial backing and the available building space – neither of which were finalised. During this period of uncertainty, alternative suggestions emerged that ranged from the considered to the more fanciful. In early 1991, for example, one member wrote to the Committee and suggested that they purchase the Milton Tennis Centre as an alternative site.⁵⁸ A few years later, a proposal to purchase part of MacArthur Chambers – opposite the Club's Edward Street façade – and to build a connexion bridge between the two properties was also entertained. In the end, Tattersall's renewed its focus towards the buildings located on the corner of Edward and Queen Streets. Although the most practical solution, it was also the most ambitious. Back in 1923, both Pat Ranson and Bill Healy – then President and Vice President – attended over fifty interviews with the vendor and others before the procurement of the original Edward Street site was complete, and it was already apparent that the negotiations for the three corner properties would prove far more challenging.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ TCAR 1991.

⁵⁶ TCAR 1992.

⁵⁷ TCAR 1993.

⁵⁸ TCM 1991.

⁵⁹ TCM 1923.

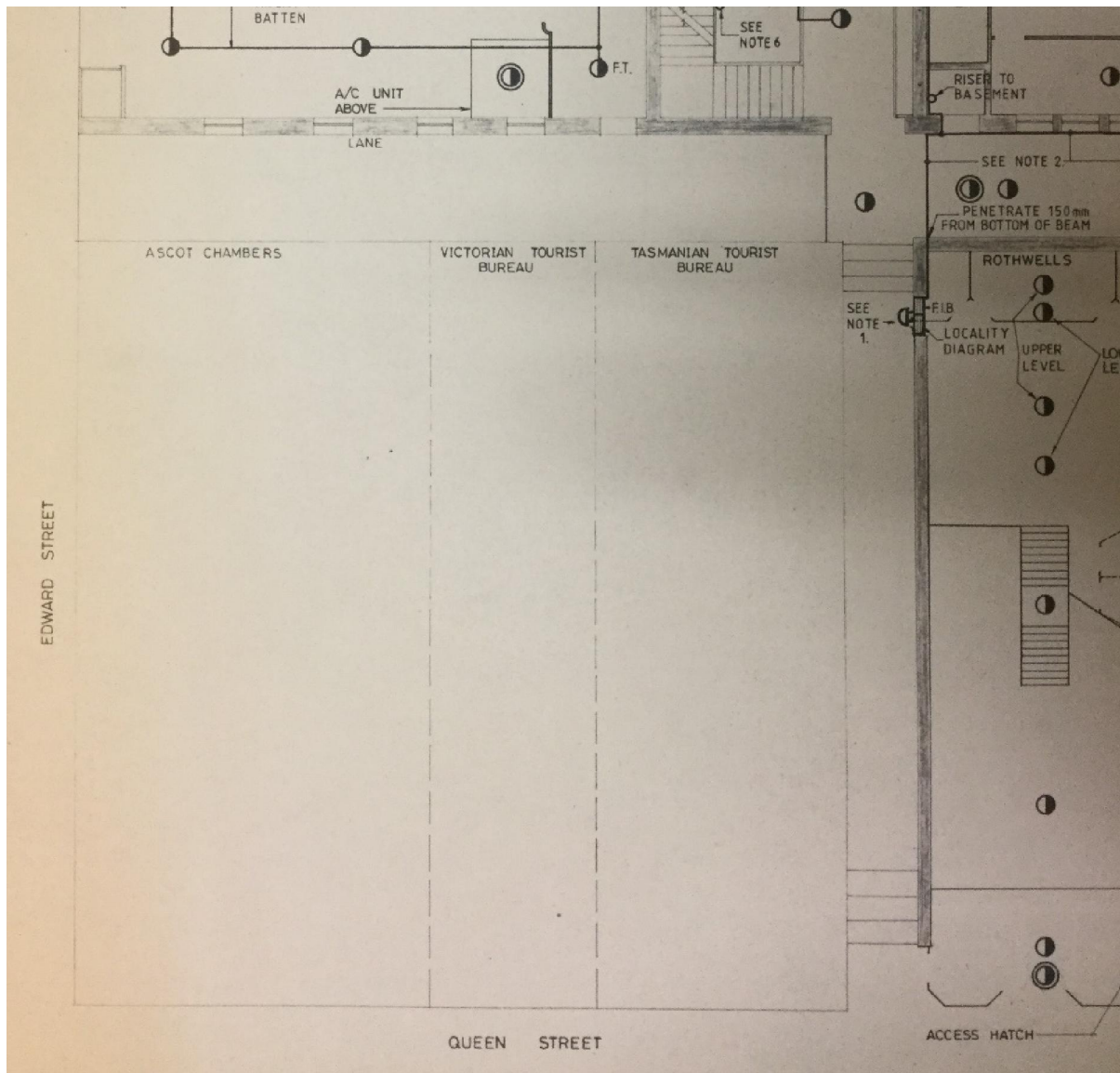


Fig. 43. A section of a building plan showing the corner of Edward and Queen Streets. The three sites, including Ascot Chambers (the NSW tourist building), were highly sought after by the Club, which at the time formed an 'L-shape' on the inside of the three properties. (Photo: Tattersall's Club Redevelopment Plans, 1991).

The Tasmanian property – which adjoined the Healy Building – went for auction in March 1992. Unlike the previous deliberation regarding the Victorian site in June 1989, the Committee was unified in its decision to bid. The Club's offer of \$3.75 million was ultimately unsuccessful, however, as the St George Bank secured the property for \$3.8 million.⁶⁰ There was little more the Club could have done. 'St George subsequently told us that they were

⁶⁰ TCM 1989.

prepared to go to whatever price it took to buy the building,' recalls Jones.⁶¹ Still, it was another setback for Tattersall's. Dr John O'Duffy, who succeeded Lloyd Holdway at the beginning of 1993, duly outlined that the Club was at something of a crossroads:

The Healy Building is dilapidated and must be replaced to enlarge dining facilities, to develop a better library and a bigger office. The Club needs other facilities – provision for mixed dining, a gym or health centre, possibly accommodation on a limited scale...The Committee is in consultation with the Club architect seeking ways of replacing the Healy Building and perhaps expanding further.⁶²

Although this appeared impossible without additional property, there was still some hope. In as early as May 1990, Tattersall's was informed that Advance Bank was keen to sell the Victorian building within one year of purchasing it.⁶³ By early 1994, the Club had received enough encouragement to begin negotiations to purchase both Advance Bank properties – including the former NSW building, Ascot Chambers – and, to a lesser extent, the site recently acquired by St George Bank. Although the Club entertained the 'complex and risky proposition' of building over its existing premises, it was clearly preferential to consolidate the corner properties, as a wider range and better proportion of new facilities would be possible under such a scheme.⁶⁴ From the outset, it was clear that any deal would involve both banks retaining some use of the properties to continue their operations from what were prime city locations. Despite an understandable sense of caution, negotiations in March 1994 were optimistic: Advance was prepared to co-operate with the Club, and while St George appeared less forthcoming, it was at least willing to consider a proposal.⁶⁵

In April 1994, it was resolved that Jones and Reddacliff – now Stage Two Consultant – would negotiate the purchases on behalf of the Committee. Positive discussions ensued with Advance: a strata-title of 158 square-metres at ground level was agreed, with both sides supporting an exchange price of around \$3 million – the basic difference between property and strata-title valuations. Negotiations with St George were less productive: their property manager suggested a strata-title deal would be preferable but wanted \$7 million for the leasehold. Reddacliff considered the proposal ridiculous, but in many respects the Club held

⁶¹ Jones, 2015.

⁶² *Tattler*, Spring 1993.

⁶³ TCM 1990.

⁶⁴ TCM 1994.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

the upper hand. If the redevelopment was to go ahead without St George's support, the bank would become isolated without any potential for redevelopment while suffering the inconvenience of a surrounding building programme alongside negative public relations with Tattersall's and its many businessmen. Although such contingents were not directly involved in the discussions, the presence of so many influential members inside the Club was useful leverage. By July, negotiations had improved remarkably, and a selling price of \$4.5 million and rental of \$2,000 per square-metre was agreed upon.⁶⁶

After considerable perseverance, deals had been struck with the owners of properties that the Club had spent the best part of a decade trying to acquire – an objective, one suspects, that the banks may have been conscious of. It was later revealed that Jones and Reddacliff, who alongside the Committee had long persisted in trying to find a breakthrough, had saved the Club at least \$200,000 in agency fees on the land negotiations.⁶⁷ 'Gentlemen, your Club is finally in possession of the corner site,' wrote O'Duffy, 'with a proposition to redevelop enabling the Club to utilise the "air space" above our neighbours, and also acquire the ground floor areas for commercial letting.'⁶⁸ The air of satisfaction in the president's words was justifiable, as it appeared that Tattersall's could finally look towards an exciting future.

v) Ascot Chambers

Though the three properties had been procured, there was significant controversy regarding the proposed demolition of Ascot Chambers. Designed by Hall and Prentice, it was the first steel-framed high-rise in Brisbane and the city's tallest building until the mid-1960s.⁶⁹ It was clear from the late 1980s, however, that the corner site would make way for the redevelopment if acquired by the Club. Ominously, the 1990 *Heritage Buildings Protection Act* – amended in 1992 as the *Queensland Heritage Act* – had listed Ascot Chambers among its 254 protected sites in the Brisbane City zone.⁷⁰ Initially an interim measure, the Act was introduced under the Goss government to prevent further destruction of Brisbane's built

⁶⁶ TCM 1994.

⁶⁷ TCM 2000.

⁶⁸ TCAR 1994.

⁶⁹ *Tattler*, Autumn 1996.

⁷⁰ *Heritage Buildings Protection Act 1990, No. 36.*

heritage, following the ‘nocturnal demolitions’ that had struck the city’s urban landscape in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s during Queensland’s ‘rush to be modern.’⁷¹



*Fig. 44. Ascot Chambers on the corner of Edward and Queen Streets, photographed shortly after its completion in 1925. At the time, the original Tattersall’s building on Edward Street was still being constructed to the left of Ascot Chambers. The proposed extensions in the 1990s would occupy the entire corner site. (Photo: *Brisbane Courier*, 25 August 1925).*

Advance Bank had always intended to demolish the structure, which was in a state of disrepair and lacking facilities. For example, there were toilets on the second and ninth floors only, and just the single staircase and two old lifts – one of which had to be worked manually and required a full-time operator.⁷² Estimated costs of renovations on the existing building were as much as the projected total of a new construction, while the bank was also aware that any future sale would be hindered by restrictions upon its development potential. In one of the first major cases to be tried under Queensland’s new heritage laws –

⁷¹ *Made in Queensland*, 146.

⁷² Olivia Johnson and Brendan Walsh, “Turning the Corner: The Tattersall’s Club Redevelopment 1990-97” (UQ unpublished pilot study, 2013), 14; *Sunday Sun* (Melbourne), 28 January 1990.

alongside the fracas concerning the conversion of the Treasury Building into a casino – the bank began proceedings in the Queensland Planning and Environment Court in 1993, and questioned the law’s definition of ‘cultural heritage significance’ and ‘historic.’⁷³ By this stage, Tattersall’s had received enough encouragement towards purchasing the site for its architects to join the legal team in preparing the case against the listing. ‘Having a listed building on the corner would have been diabolical for the Club,’ confirmed Rasmussen in 2013, ‘and so we had to find every avenue to get it knocked down as soon as possible.’⁷⁴

Judge Kevin Row ultimately ruled in favour of Advance Bank on 17 December 1993, having declared that Ascot Chambers was not of historical significance as defined within the Act, and ordered its removal from the Heritage Register.⁷⁵ He also agreed that the law’s wording was vague.⁷⁶ The Queensland National Trust, which had emerged as the most vocal opponents of the bank and the Club during the debate, was unsurprisingly critical:

This decision of the court overturns the work of both community and expert bodies. Lawyers concentrated as much on a legal play of words as they did on establishing a cultural significance as intended by the Heritage Act. Anyone familiar with Brisbane will know the long thin shape of Ascot Chambers at the eastern end of the mall.⁷⁷

There were concerns for several years that the decision would set a dangerous precedent in challenging heritage listings. Many local architects were appalled, and the likes of Robert Riddell – who oversaw the well-received renovation of Brisbane’s Customs House – labelled the outcome ‘a tragedy.’⁷⁸ The Queensland National Trust also pointed out that Ascot Chambers remained ‘in registers and inventories of significant places maintained by the National Trust, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, and the Australian Heritage Commission,’ but Tattersall’s was able to successfully lobby for a total redevelopment of the site.⁷⁹ It still had to negotiate the purchase of the property, but a possible stumbling block had been avoided, and the subsequent deal owed much to the successful legal challenge in

⁷³ *Courier-Mail*, 24 April 1995, 14.

⁷⁴ Rasmussen, 2013.

⁷⁵ Planning and Environmental Court, “Appeal 169 of 1993: Between Advance Bank Australia Limited and the Queensland Heritage Council, 8-19th November. Reasons for Judgement,” (extract) 1-27.

⁷⁶ *Courier-Mail*, 24 April 1995, 14.

⁷⁷ National Trust of Queensland, “Community and Conservation Experts lose to lawyers,” unpublished media release, 21 December 1993.

⁷⁸ *Courier-Mail*, 24 April 1995, 14.

⁷⁹ National Trust of Queensland, “Ascot Chambers still a Heritage Site,” unpublished media release, 26 December 1993.

1993. There was, of course, some contradiction between the Club's reverence towards its own heritage and its disregard for the heritage value of another property. From the moment redevelopment plans were announced, Tattersall's had stressed that its existing Club Room and Dining Hall would not be altered in any way, while the listing of its own premises under the Act was a source of prestige and pride.

The Club remained wary of possible appeals against the decision, and there was a degree of pressure for the site to be developed sooner rather than later. Reddacliff and Jones even met with John Gallagher (Queen's Counsel) in June 1994, who believed that the government might intend to change the legislation and re-list the building.⁸⁰ Although the government did warn that they could not rule out 'complaints from the heritage people,' there was no appeal against the decision. Tattersall's could also count on the support of Lord Mayor Jim Soorley, an honorary member, who felt that the redevelopment would benefit the Queen Street Mall. For Ascot Chambers, almost seventy years of history was about to disappear as demolition was scheduled to begin in early 1995.⁸¹

vi) Financing Stage Two

In the aftermath of Stage One, Tattersall's appeared in a strong financial position. Annual profit had risen every year between 1992 and 1994 – partly assisted by Club trading and property income – while \$6.2 million in cash funds had been accumulated. In addition, the Club's net assets were now worth over \$17.3 million.⁸² The restructured membership fees also continued to resonate, and in 1993 members' subscription generated over \$1 million for the first time.⁸³ This figure only increased as more members were admitted to the Club.

Even so, it was clear that the projected capital investment for Stage Two was beyond what Tattersall's could afford. In October 1994, Reddacliff proposed a budget of \$25.5 million, which included: \$17 million for design, construction and escalation; \$8 million for the Advance Bank and St George Bank properties; and \$500,000 for loose furniture and utensils.⁸⁴ A detailed financial plan was drawn up by Fry and Russel Beecham, the Club's

⁸⁰ TCM 1994.

⁸¹ TCM 1995.

⁸² TCAR 1992, 1993 and 1994.

⁸³ TCAR 1993.

⁸⁴ TCM 1994.

accountant, to lodge a sophisticated application for a loan of \$24 million. Even in Brisbane property development circles, this was a considerable amount of money to raise in the early 1990s.⁸⁵ Elsewhere, although it was reported in the mid-1990s that exclusive members' only clubs around Australia were 'spending millions upgrading facilities,' investment by the likes of the Royal Automobile Club in Sydney (\$5.5 million) and the Naval, Military and Air Force Club in Adelaide (\$1 million) was far less substantial than Tattersall's.⁸⁶ Rising land values were not limited to Brisbane, and clubs such as the Gallipoli in Sydney even made deals with developers to build around or on top of their premises in return for additional floorspace and extra cash benefits. With operating costs rising every year, Gallipoli Club President John Hartley reasoned it was the 'only way to maintain Club activities at the present address.'⁸⁷

Fortunately, Tattersall's was in a superior position, and the Club was confident that another deal could be struck with the NAB. Recent negotiations had been smooth, while O'Duffy held a good relationship with the bank's Queensland manager. Before the application was finalised, however, the NAB corresponded with its Melbourne head office and, shortly after, Tattersall's received a scrap of paper that rejected the proposal because the bank was 'not lending any more money to football clubs.'⁸⁸ It was a stunning rebuff. 'After 100 years of banking with them, we were knocked back,' laments Jones.⁸⁹ Fry recalls 'meeting up and sitting down with John O'Duffy a few days later, and he was crushed.'⁹⁰ The fact that the NAB flatly turned down the proposition suggests that it may have done so regardless of how the application was framed. Fry believed this had much to do with the size of the loan, as well as the Club's legal structure: 'Because this is a club, not a corporate entity, if something went wrong then the members would have been responsible for repayment.'⁹¹ It is possible that the bank did not want to risk putting so many prominent city professionals offside, as would have been the case had the Club run into financial difficulties.

Other banks including Westpac and the Australian and New Zealand Bank were also against loaning the money, especially in the aftermath of the NAB's refusal. Commonwealth Bank

⁸⁵ Johnson and Walsh, "Turning the Corner," 16.

⁸⁶ *The Weekend Australia*, 27 January 1996, 2.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Fry, 2015.

⁸⁹ Jones, 2015.

⁹⁰ Fry, 2015.

⁹¹ Fry, 2015.

displayed some initial interest but was non-committal, principally on the amount requested and the proposed interest rates. Jones believes that the reluctance to support the Club was misplaced. 'Even if we went broke, and you pulled the whole place down, the land's worth alone would more than cover any debts that we may have had,' he argues.⁹² Fry then met with the Chairman of the Bank of Queensland, Harry Baines, who suggested that his bank might be able to provide half of the amount. Within days, Baines intimated that the Queensland Industry Development Cooperation (QIDC) was interested in providing the other half. The QIDC – a government-owned descendant of the Queensland Agricultural Bank (1902) which commenced operations in 1986 – had loaned heavily in the country and was keen to balance its books with substantial city lending. Ultimately, it decided to fund the entire amount. 'Suddenly – well, after a few hoops – the \$24 million was approved,' recalls Fry.⁹³ Jones, who notes that it was a 'team effort,' remembers discussions with the bank being so professional that its managing director, Chris Freeman, 'came to Tattersall's himself to record a training film for the QIDC on how to negotiate a successful loan.'⁹⁴

On 30 December 1994, a fixed-rate facility of \$24 million was finalised with the QIDC and Tattersall's could at last implement Stage Two. The Club's position had changed since 1987 when it was against going into debt, but its requirements were as necessary as they were extensive. The long-term nature of the loan was important as it allowed the Club to trade for several years before having to renegotiate the facility at a time when the redevelopment would be completed.⁹⁵ The positive relationship established with the QIDC was also vital, particularly as the amount borrowed was later revisited when the building scheme took shape and further costs became apparent. Between 1995 and 1997 the Club even borrowed an additional \$1 million from the TRC – which had steadily built up its reserves since its formation – in the wake of rising costs.⁹⁶ Although there was an element of risk with the overall financial outlay and associated debt, confidence among the Committee was high. 'It looked do-able,' says Fry. 'If you looked at the figures – which were set out by our income, our expenditure, our borrowing, and how we could cover our payments – it was there.'⁹⁷

⁹² Jones, 2015.

⁹³ Fry, 2015.

⁹⁴ Jones, 2015.

⁹⁵ TCAR 1994.

⁹⁶ TCAR 1995, 1996 and 1997.

⁹⁷ Fry, 2015.

With long-term financial backing in place, another crucial hurdle in the redevelopment had been overcome. In addition to the loan, and the healthy turnover being recorded by the Club, Tattersall's benefited from its waiting list of between 3,500 and 5,000 throughout the early 1990s. While total membership had gradually risen by 600 between 1988 and 1994, over 1,000 new members were accepted in both 1995 and 1996.⁹⁸ With the entrance fee at the \$1,000 rate approved by members in 1988, over \$2 million was received from that source alone in those two years, compared with previous figures of \$235,000 in 1994, \$69,500 in 1993, and \$104,500 in 1992.⁹⁹ Naturally, the additional members also contributed to an increase in subscription income. While the project hinged upon the successful negotiation of a long-term loan, the Club's ability to secure such vast, ready funds from its membership in a short space of time was significant. 'Tattersall's leveraged on its popularity with its huge waiting list,' confirms Michael Cassidy, who joined the Club in 1984 and became treasurer twenty years later. 'It is most unlikely that any other club in Australia would have been able to raise such funds at no cost – it was a healthy and intangible asset waiting to be plucked when required to fund the Stage Two building programme.'¹⁰⁰

vii) Membership support

In addition to securing the required sites and necessary funding, another important factor towards the redevelopment's feasibility was membership support. A Special Meeting took place at Tattersall's on 29 November 1994 to present members with the Stage Two proposals and, it was hoped, to obtain their approval. For the first time, the Committee provided exact details of the new facilities, which were to include: a twenty-five metre swimming pool; a 296 square-metre gymnasium; eighteen residential suites for members, their guests and those visiting from reciprocal clubs; function and conference rooms for over 300 patrons; a mixed dining room for 120 diners; a mixed cocktail bar and racing bar; a new library and administration offices; expanded kitchens, storerooms and cool-rooms; and extended retail outlets facing Edward and Queen Streets.¹⁰¹ O'Duffy portrayed the project as a once-in-a-lifetime development, and emphasised that the burden of repayment for the

⁹⁸ TCAR 1988, 1994, 1995 and 1996.

⁹⁹ TCAR 1992-1996.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Michael Cassidy, conducted by the author, 19 April 2016.

¹⁰¹ *Tattler*, Summer 1994.

long-term borrowings would be spread over future generations. The Committee did concede, however, that its financial plans involved a considerable amount of estimation.¹⁰²

O’Duffy also convincingly reiterated the necessity of the new development. Some points were familiar: for instance, the decrepit Healy Building – of which parts had been built before 1900 – was now termite-ridden, while the Club’s kitchen remained inadequate in both its size and amenities. It had become apparent that the growing popularity of Club events and external functions was increasing the demands upon facilities, while staff often had to work into the early hours of the morning to prepare the Club for the next day.¹⁰³

There were also several new components outlined in response to societal change. For example, the Health Centre – which consisted of the gymnasium, pool and sauna – would cater for the well-being and fitness of members within a busy city lifestyle which, at the time, lacked the convenience of central facilities.¹⁰⁴ Accommodation, meanwhile, could satisfy several requirements, as it would offer support for functions such as weddings, deliver true reciprocity to visitors from affiliated clubs, and provide for a growing membership-base outside of Brisbane – which in 1994 amounted to around 1,000 country and interstate members – all while optimising the use of a prime central location.¹⁰⁵

There was also increasing demand for mixed activities at the Club. Newly introduced family-based functions such as father and daughter evenings and Mother’s Day breakfasts had already proven successful, yet such occasions tested both the utility and policy of a solitary, traditional male-only dining room. Of course, a lack of mixed facilities also prevented much of the city’s workforce from using the Club generally. Both the Brisbane Club and the Queensland Club provided sizeable, ornate areas where mixed functions or groups were accommodated, yet both clubs maintained a male-only policy in their main dining rooms. Several committeemen also had first-hand experience of the Australian Club in Sydney and the Athenaeum Club in Melbourne, both of which had undertaken similar changes.¹⁰⁶ In addition, such provisions had clearly been evident when Jones undertook his tour of reciprocal clubs in the 1980s. These factors all highlighted that Tattersall’s had fallen behind

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ TCM 1994.

¹⁰⁵ TCAR 1994.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.; TCM 1994.

its contemporaries. Lastly, it was important that the new additions could support additional members. While the ten-year waiting list added prestige to a Tattersall's membership, it also had the adverse effect of reducing enthusiasm for many. It was also primarily a symptom of the limited premises, as opposed to a deliberate policy to engineer status.

Members – or at least those who attended the Special Meeting – were overwhelmingly supportive of the proposals, though there were a few dissenting voices. One member, who spoke strongly against the motion, claimed that the Committee had treated members in a 'cavalier fashion' and had provided insufficient notice of the project; he also referred to the proposed health centre and accommodation facilities as 'baloney.' The Committee could counter that plans had been available within the Club for three weeks prior to the meeting, while the general concept of Stage Two had been apparent for years. Other members were critical of the Committee's request 'for a blank cheque,' and the prospect of additional members being phased in to assist funding when facilities were already overstretched.¹⁰⁷ Such complaints bore some similarities to protests levelled at the Committee following the purchase of the Edward Street site in 1923, when two members criticised the inadequate communication and, unsuccessfully, proposed to limit the Committee's 'autocratic power' in expenditure to prevent the Club from falling into an insolvent state.¹⁰⁸

Jones recalls only minor controversy at the Special Meeting. 'Two of the proposed facilities caused a few questions,' he remembers. 'The first regarded the need for accommodation, the other was for the swimming pool.'¹⁰⁹ Most who spoke at the meeting did so with praise regarding the vision of the Club's leadership and the progressive nature of the project. Certainly Peter Carroll, who joined the Club in 1990 and became president in 2003, believed that the redevelopment and its cost was simply in keeping with the history of the Club:

When you look back there's been a couple of occasions where the Committee has taken a major decision that could have blown up in its face. The first decision would have been to commence the Club in 1883; the second one was probably the decision to buy here in the 1920s and build, because they went into debt. These were big steps...When the Depression came in 1930, it probably made it touch and go for a time, and that's probably why they were reluctant to go into debt for so many years until Stage Two.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ TCM 1994.

¹⁰⁸ TCM 1923.

¹⁰⁹ Jones, 2015.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Peter Carroll, conducted by the author, 18 September 2015.

In the end, the motion was carried almost unanimously by 296 votes to four. The evening climaxed with a free bar for all those in attendance, as many members raised their glasses towards an encouraging and exciting future for Tattersall's Club.



Fig. 45. A model of the anticipated new Tattersall's building on the corner of Edward and Queen Streets, which was on show at the Club in late 1994. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1994).

viii) Building, design and opening

Demolition of the three adjoining buildings was completed in May 1995. Following a public tender, Hutchinson's was again awarded the construction contract. Building began in August 1995, and by the end of the year the new development was two stories above ground. The Building sub-committee – which included Fry, Maclean and O'Duffy – maintained a close check on the budget and progress. One important condition was for the Club to remain fully functional throughout the construction. 'You can imagine,' recalls Jones, 'building within the boundary of Edward and Queen Streets – and the Club staying open – was a tremendous task.'¹¹¹ This partly accounted for delays in completion. Initially, it was anticipated that the new extensions would be finished by the end of 1996 but, after several proposed dates came and went, the new facilities were ultimately operational from 2 June 1997.¹¹² 'It was a difficult site,' confirms Carroll. 'Hutchinson's had untold difficulties in actually building. They had all these things put on them about when they could work and when they couldn't – dust control, things like that.'¹¹³ Upon completion, Bob Templeton – who succeeded O'Duffy as president in 1996 – aptly remarked that there was 'no doubt that Jack and Scott Hutchinson always wanted to build a beautiful building, and the evidence is here for all to see.'¹¹⁴

The builders had again carried out the designs of Robin Gibson and Partners, under Project Supervisor Finn Rasmussen. According to Rasmussen, the construction with Hutchinson's allowed for a 'collaborative approach.'¹¹⁵ Although equipped with the latest conveniences, the new building was not to radically depart from its heritage – similar to the approach employed for the Arcade – nor mar the streetscape of the Queen Street Mall with a futuristic remodelling.¹¹⁶ Thus, the greatest challenge in designing the new building was for it to work seamlessly with the style of Hall, Prentice and Phillips. 'Finn understood perfectly well,' recalls Jones. 'He encapsulated the idea of the old with the new.'¹¹⁷ Rasmussen's expertise extended to every interior detail, from custom-designed tables and brass inlays on the doors to art deco-style fittings. Such specifications were included to provide a sense of

¹¹¹ Interview with Paul Jones, conducted by Olivia Johnson and Brendan Walsh, 18 November 2013.

¹¹² *Tattler*, Winter 1997.

¹¹³ Carroll, 2015.

¹¹⁴ *Tattler*, Spring 1997.

¹¹⁵ Rasmussen, 2013.

¹¹⁶ Johnson and Walsh, "Turning the Corner," 18.

¹¹⁷ Jones, 2013.

continuity throughout the premises without simply ‘mimicking the old.’¹¹⁸ It was intended that members and guests would be able to move seamlessly between the buildings without noticing any significant change in the style of the Club. Although this was not an easy prerequisite, both the architects and Hutchinson’s respected the wishes of the Club and there were weekly, often daily, meetings to address any concerns.¹¹⁹ In a nice touch, many of the new areas within the Club were named after presidents who served throughout the redevelopment: the Grand Ballroom – the main function area – could be divided into three smaller spaces: the Williams, Holdway and Templeton rooms; the Needham Room was a smaller private dining room for up to sixteen guests; the new library was named after O’Duffy; while the Healy Room – the new mixed-dining area – was named in honour of the former long-serving president whose building had made way for the redevelopment.



Fig. 46. (left) Tattersall’s President John O’Duffy ‘turning the first sod’ on 4 August 1995; (right) the vacant corner site as construction begins. (Photos: Tattersall’s Club archives).

¹¹⁸ Rasmussen, 2013.

¹¹⁹ TCAR 1995.

Tattersall's was justifiably proud when its new extensions officially opened on 7 August 1997, bringing a lengthy redevelopment process to its conclusion. The opening was attended by Queensland Premier Robert Borbidge and Lord Mayor Jim Soorley. 'When the history is written about Brisbane,' remarked Soorley, 'this building will be noted as the most significant that was approved and constructed during this period.'¹²⁰ Borbidge spoke of the Club's significance as 'part of our living history and identity,' before appropriately noting that 'the Club's enduring quality is as much about changing with the times as it is staying in touch with the past.'¹²¹ In terms of scale and facilities provided, the redevelopment certainly represented the most prominent building work at Tattersall's since its original premises was erected in 1926. It also marked the beginning of a new modern era in the Club's history, as Templeton concluded. 'The new building heralds a very big change for Tattersall's,' he said, 'not only in bricks and mortar – but also in the way the Club will be used in the future.'¹²²



Fig. 47. The new Tattersall's building. In adjoining the Club's 1926 Edward Street property (to the left), and its 1939 Queen Street property (to the right), the new structure consolidated Tattersall's premises across the entire corner of Edward and Queen Streets. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1997).

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ *Tattler*, Spring 1997.

¹²² *Tattler*, Autumn 1997.



Fig. 48. Tattersall's new mixed dining area, the Healy Room, located on the second floor of the new building. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1997).



Fig. 49. The new function room, able to cater for over 300 patrons. The room could also be divided into three separate functions areas. It was located on the third floor of the new building. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1997).



Fig. 50. The lobby area of the two new levels of accommodation, which occupied the fourth and fifth floors of the new building. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1997).



Fig. 51. The new swimming pool, located on the seventh floor just above the gymnasium and Health Centre. Built to strict International Olympic Committee standards, it was the highest suspended swimming pool in the Southern Hemisphere at the time. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1997).

5) Performance

Given the substantial effort that went into achieving the physical change of the redevelopment, it is easy to forget that the Club was open and operational every day while the discussions, planning and eventual building took place. The years between 1984 and 1997 represent one of the most transformative phases in Tattersall's history, and internally the period was also one of transition. Standards, service and the material culture within the Club rose to a premium level, but not at the expense of the friendly atmosphere that Tattersall's had become renowned for. New and often more inclusive functions appeared on a wider scale, though traditional staples of the Tattersall's calendar were more popular than ever. Similarly, while formative steps were taken towards the external function market, iconic features of the Club such as its luncheon and its racing activities also endured. This chapter outlines how Tattersall's achieved a notable balance in maintaining such continuity amid the significant changes that were both occurring and impending within the Club.

Before examining how Tattersall's operated during this period, it is important to recognise the significant rise in membership numbers that occurred despite previous Committee statements to the contrary. For instance, in 1986 it was acknowledged that the Club had 'reached a level where facilities are sorely taxed,' while in 1990 – with a membership of 4,600 – the Committee declared that it would 'not increase the number of members until additional facilities planned for Stage Two are completed.'¹ Numbers continued to increase throughout the early 1990s, however, before rising substantially in both 1995 and 1996. By the beginning of 1997, total membership was just under 7,000, even though operational facilities were the same as they had been in 1986.² Of course, the change in policy provided vast available funds through the entrance fees income. 'That's how we attained the seed capital to go on with Stage Two,' confirms Fry.³ In addition to easing the financial burden, Jones believed that it was a logical step given the imminent extensions:

People had been knocking on the door wanting to become members of Tattersall's for years. We had an artificial limit that was based on what we thought the Club could cater for...It was common sense to put in as many members as we wanted – an extra 3,000 or 4,000 if need be. Because the money that we got in was 'money for old rope'...And by

¹ TCAR 1986 and 1990.

² TCAR 1995 and 1996.

³ Fry, 2015.

the time they got their feet under the table and started using the Club, we'd have the new facilities to accommodate them.⁴

Ultimately, the Club had little to lose in accepting so many members. Beyond the immediate financial benefits, the subsequent strain on facilities simply highlighted the limitations of the existing premises which, in turn, only further emphasised the need for expansion.

i) A new manager

New General Manager Paul Jones, who replaced Secretary Clelland, arrived with a distinguished background. An Army officer of twenty-nine years who had reached the rank of colonel, Jones went on to serve two governors-general – Sir John Kerr and Sir Zelman Cowen – as military secretary and comptroller. In these two positions he was responsible for the finances, training of staff, conduct of functions, and care of VIP visitors (which included the Queen), and naturally he gained first-hand experience of the high standards required in the running of a prestigious institution.⁵ Upon visiting the Club for the first time, however, Jones was far from enamoured. 'I have to say I was very disappointed in the run-down fabric of Tattersall's,' he recalls. 'The drapes were threadbare and unable to be dry-cleaned, carpets were worn out, and the staff wore white dressmaker supermarket-style clothes.' There were also coloured table cloths and plastic floral arrangements, which hardly screamed sophistication. Nonetheless, Jones felt that there was a challenge to be met, and after a handover of sorts from Clelland – 'He left the office, kicked the door on his way out, and I never saw him again' – the new manager began at the Club on 1 February 1984.⁶

In June of that year, President Needham announced that the Dining Room was to receive new table linen, uniforms, menus, and silver-plated cutlery to replace the stainless-steel variety.⁷ Needham's successor Leo Williams reported in 1985 that the Club had modernised its administration, equipment and facilities to help streamline the Club's operations, with a new computer and telephone system installed.⁸ Many improvements were suggested by the new general manager. 'Jones introduced proper uniforms, white table cloths, and brought the place up to standard,' recalls long-term staff member Jonathan Cauldwell, who has held

⁴ Jones, 2015.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Tattler*, 1 June 1984.

⁸ TCAR 1985.

various roles at the Club over the past twenty-five years including maître d', food and beverage manager, and house manager. 'He had a vision that he'd brought from Government House, and started buying lots of fine china, silverware, furniture, antiques – all the Chesterfield tub leather chairs in the Members' Bar today are from his era.'⁹



Fig. 52. New Tattersall's General Manager (later CEO) Paul Jones, photographed in his office sometime in the early 1990s. (Photo: Tattersall's Club Archives).

In particular, the main Club Room – which, from around this time, was generally referred to as the Members' Bar – underwent several improvements. A new carpet was arranged in 1987, sourced from the makers of the first one used on the Club Room floor in the early

⁹ Interview with Jonathan Cauldwell, conducted by the author, 25 November 2015.

1950s. It featured an identical design and served as a prime example of an improvement executed with tradition in mind.¹⁰ The room's interior was also elevated by the installation of six brass chandeliers in 1986.¹¹ Perhaps the most significant improvement driven by Jones related to the ceiling, however, which received expert gilding courtesy of Sandy Burnside in 1992. Burnside's work brought to life the intricate detail that was previously undersold in one of the building's most striking features. He had been responsible for the gilding of the ornate fence surrounding Buckingham Palace, which was testament to the Club's rediscovered philosophy that only the best would suffice. The cost was significant at over \$100,000, but this reflected the confidence among the Club's leadership in both the approach and Tattersall's future, at a crucial time between redevelopment stages.¹²

While such changes upgraded the Club, they also reflected a heightened sense of refinement. 'Naturally, my first reaction was to improve the existing furniture and fittings,' recalls Jones, who adds that 'you have to prove your credentials to the people that are going to approve the spending of any money.'¹³ Advances continued throughout the 1990s in anticipation of the new facilities. It became apparent, however, that Jones could not carry out all the purchasing while running Tattersall's and acting as an interface between the architect and builder. An operations officer, Nathan Magnus, was subsequently hired. 'He sourced everything – from teaspoons to gym equipment – and was the unsung hero of the development,' says Jones.¹⁴ Wedgwood silverware was ordered up to one year in advance from Ireland, while bone china, hollowware and Italian Sant' Andrea crockery were also selected for use across both dining rooms. Numerous dessert, gueridon and carvery trolleys were also acquired.¹⁵ Although assisted by the Committee's backing and, later, individuals such as Magnus, Jones' impact upon Tattersall's was clear. 'If you look at the Club and the way it's set up and its atmosphere,' reflects Graeme Fry, 'Jones had a lot to do with that.'¹⁶

¹⁰ TCAR 1987.

¹¹ TCAR 1986.

¹² Jones, 2015.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Cauldwell, 2015.

¹⁶ Fry, 2015.



Fig. 53. The Club Room ceiling was brought to life via gilding in 1991. (Photo: Alex Lister, 2015).

ii) An enduring luncheon institution

Tattersall's luncheon remained an important Club tradition throughout the redevelopment. Having been unimpressed with the fabric of Tattersall's, however, Jones was similarly disappointed in the standard of the Club food upon his arrival in 1984. 'The Club provided large basic meals and liquor,' he recalls. 'Although they were wholesome, they certainly were not top quality.' Jones subsequently hired the Club's 'first top qualified chef,' but while the standard rose, the sense of comfort and tradition remained.¹⁷ From February 1985, it was announced that traditional meals would be served on the same day each week. Tuesday, for instance, featured crumbed lambs' brains and bacon, while Friday included steamed smoked cod and oyster sauce.¹⁸ 'The Dining Room served wonderfully old-fashioned English food,' recalls waitress Virginia Jenson, who joined its staff in 1995. 'The

¹⁷ Jones, 2015.

¹⁸ *Tattler*, 1 February 1985.

same things were always on; pea and ham soup served every day – the kitchen burned the soup once and there was almost a riot!¹⁹ Improving standards and sustaining old favourites was clearly a successful ploy. The number of meals served in the Dining Room had been in decline since 1969, despite a gradually expanding membership base. There were, however, consecutive annual increases in meals served between 1984 and 1987 for the first time since the 1960s, and this was before any major membership drive.²⁰ ‘It was comfort food: it was lamb’s fry, corned beef – it was oxtail Thursday,’ says Cauldwell. ‘Members would come into the Club depending on the particular day’s menu, and they loved it.’²¹

There were some minor concerns outside the Club’s control during the 1980s. For instance, the fringe benefit tax proposed in late 1985 under the Hawke government applied to meals at Tattersall’s that were previously written-off by many members as business expenses. The Committee was confident that the Club would not be greatly affected, however, because of the atmosphere and excellent value for money that the luncheon offered.²² Its confidence was not misplaced as the Dining Room remained busy. The traditional break-even policy in meal-pricing continued, and the good value was an enduringly popular characteristic of the Tattersall’s dining experience. ‘It was a directive of the Committee during my first ten years at the Club that we were not to make a profit from the meals,’ confirms Jones.²³

The 1988 World Expo held in Brisbane posed more of a threat. With over fifteen million visitors passing through the city, the event demonstrated Brisbane’s rapidly growing tourism potential following substantial foreign investment and development – it was no longer a supposed ‘backwater,’ but a modern, advanced city.²⁴ Queensland on the whole was illuminated as ‘a dynamic and progressive state’ which possessed a ‘cosmopolitan and innovative mood.’²⁵ The restaurant and entertainment culture in Brisbane was enlivened, and the city was exposed to a wider range of increasingly sophisticated dining experiences. ‘Lunches in the Dining Room fell off considerably,’ recalls Jones.²⁶ Having initially overseen

¹⁹ Interview with Virginia Jenson, conducted by the author, 26 February 2016.

²⁰ TCAR 1984-1987.

²¹ Cauldwell, 2015.

²² TCAR 1985.

²³ Jones, 2015.

²⁴ Fitzgerald et al., *Made in Queensland*, 185-6.

²⁵ Evans, *History of Queensland*, 251.

²⁶ Jones, 2015.

an upsurge in the number of meals served, the number dropped from almost 50,000 in 1987 to around 43,000 in both 1988 and 1989.²⁷ The effects of the Expo were ultimately far reaching. 'I could see changes coming and we upped our standard of meals to keep pace with the new trends,' adds Jones, before the negative trend was soon reversed.²⁸

In 1993, President O'Duffy stated that 'luncheons are still our main activity and provide the reputation for the friendship we declare to be our motto.'²⁹ The limited confines of both the kitchen and the Dining Room were under considerable strain, however, as were the staff. Whereas Friday traditionally experienced two-sittings, this was now the norm for most days of the week. 'It was a very busy place,' remembers Cauldwell. 'Tuesday to Friday it was book-only – we used to do about 200 for lunch every day except Monday, which was still 120 to 130.' Friday was 'just ballistic' and necessitated a three-strike call at the bar for the member in question to take their place in the Dining Room, or else forfeit the reservation.³⁰ As membership continued to increase, so did the demand – especially when the more extensive Stage Two began. Nonetheless, the Club 'flourished' according to Fry: 'There were people walking on trestles, things hanging off the wall – it was like a building site – yet trade was unbelievable.'³¹ Indeed, the 59,000 meals served in 1996 was the most since 1960, a figure further assisted by an increase in functions and evening meals served at the Club.³²

While it was financially imperative for Tattersall's to remain open throughout the redevelopment, conditions were obviously very trying. Large plastic sheets and incessant dust and noise provided a continuous reminder of the changes taking place throughout the Club. As the centrepiece of daily Club life, and with membership increasing, a seat in the Dining Room became more highly sought after than ever before – members were even known to form lines and 'pull rank' to hurriedly gain access. Maintaining decorum and morale during this era provided a challenge for the staff, but Jones likened the Dining Room to 'the Windmill Theatre in London during the Blitz – we never closed.'³³ The Dining Room

²⁷ TCAR 1987 and 1988.

²⁸ Jones, 2015.

²⁹ *Tattler*, Spring 1993.

³⁰ Cauldwell, 2015.

³¹ Fry, 2015.

³² TCAR 1996.

³³ Johnson and Walsh, "Turning the Corner," 20; Jones, 2013.

was therefore able to sustain its character despite a challenging period of transition, and the strong rapport among members continued to define the Club, as Jenson recalls:

It was a step back in time – you took their pulse before their order! There was enormous charm to the place and it was great fun. It was entertaining, and it had a nice mix of characters due to the racing connection – there were still some bookies as well as judges and stockbrokers...Tattersall's was like a big family between members and staff, with renegade cousins and nasty uncles. There were some lovely old men who were very kind to us all. Some were in their eighties who went to school together, and would talk about doing the hurdles when they were children. It was like a boarding school for grown-ups – three circuses running at once – and I just fell in love with the place.³⁴

In keeping with the traditional spirit of Tattersall's, there was also a lot of fun to be had alongside a real sense of belonging, as Cauldwell testifies:

As much as it was a prestigious club, it was a club: it wasn't a fine-dining restaurant or a hotel – it was a place where people wanted to be known and noticed. We would have particular people coming in on particular days and we'd always have their table put aside. Instead of calling it the 'Smith Table' or the 'Johnson Table,' I decided to give them a bit of prestige, so I coded them. They had names like 'Black Hawk,' 'Code Red,' 'Delta Force' – these guys became proud of their table. They'd ring up and say, 'Delta Force is coming in!' or 'Code Red is on target!' – and it became folklore within the Club.³⁵

On occasion, a playful approach was also employed with guests. In the mid-1990s, Australian Rugby Union World Cup winner John Eales (an honorary member) and the forward pack came in for Friday lunch at Tattersall's. While preparing the Dining Room, Cauldwell discovered one particularly small table base – and an idea formed. 'I decided to make it like a children's tea party,' he recalls. The small table was placed in the centre of the Dining Room and set appropriately. Instead of normal cutlery there was an oyster fork, butter knife and teaspoon, with port glasses for wine and short espresso cups for coffee. As Cauldwell led the players through to their table inside a packed Dining Room – with all the members aware of the ploy – a memorable scene formed. 'They sat in these chairs, and of course the table came to their knees. They're all looking at each other completely confused, not knowing what was going on, but then the whole room just burst out laughing and clapping.'³⁶ Needless to say, there was a properly arranged table set aside for the team to move on to and a professional service resumed, but the sense of enjoyment and occasional

³⁴ Jenson, 2016.

³⁵ Cauldwell, 2015.

³⁶ Ibid.

mischief within the Club was obvious. At other times, the old ‘war cries’ associated with members’ former schools could often be heard among groups across the Dining Room, with many members having attended the likes of Brisbane Boys’ College, Brisbane Grammar School, Churchie, Nudgee College and St Joseph’s. In contrast, World War Two veteran Brian Halligan could bring the place to a standstill with impromptu, *a cappella* renditions of *Land of Hope and Glory* and *Rule Britannia*, with members sat in quiet appreciation before bursting into applause at the rousing final notes (Halligan was also known to instigate drill marching contests in the Members’ Bar, with Jones often called out of his office to judge).³⁷ The visit of the rugby forwards was, incidentally, just one instance of the Club’s continued hospitality of sportsmen. The Australian Test Cricket team, for example, used to dine at the Club on the eve of every Gabba Test match, and in November 1995 legendary spinner Shane Warne even managed to break the leg off an antique chair.³⁸

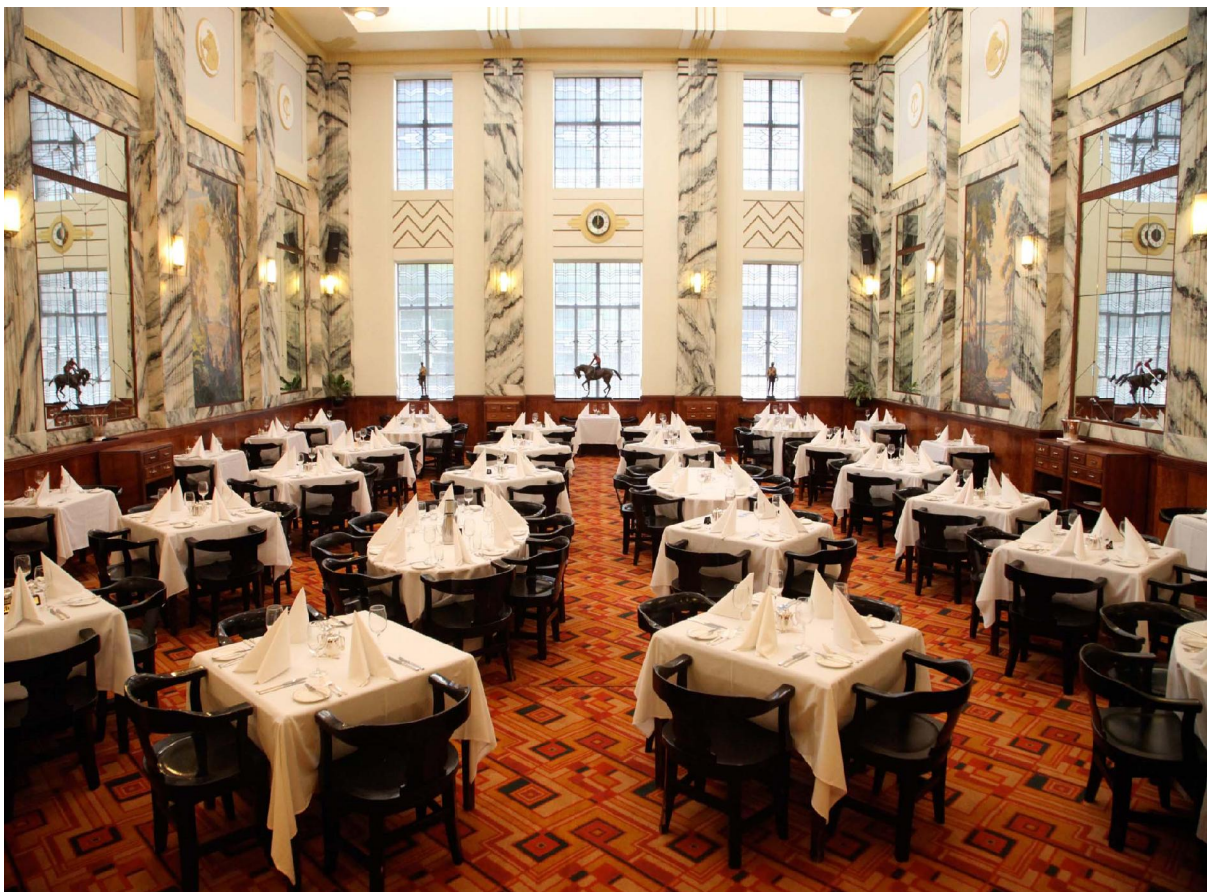


Fig. 54. The Members’ Dining Room – now rarely referred to as the Dining Hall – remained very popular throughout the redevelopment period. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 2012).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *Tattler*, Spring 2007.

Throughout the redevelopment process, the service and occupancy within the Dining Room was at an optimal level, and the luncheon continued to define the Club with its depth of friendships and vibrant, jovial atmosphere. Despite its enduring quality, however, there was still a clear need for another dining area. Although the Chandelier Room was available for private lunches and dinners, it was designed for members or guests that required a smaller, private setting. A new, fully-sized additional dining room would not only help to supply a growing demand but, more importantly, it would also cater for females.³⁹ The Members' Dining Room could therefore remain unwavering in its tradition, and its unaltered nature was testament to its reverence among members as an essential feature of Tattersall's Club.

iii) Functions old and new

Despite there being no additional facilities available until 1997, the frequency and variety of functions held at the Club increased throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Novel attractions were required to counter the decline in long, boozy lunches and the traditional '5 o'clock swill' of drinkers.⁴⁰ 'The days of long sessions after work were over – drink driving laws along with TV had altered the habits of a lifetime,' testifies Jones. 'Mobile phones also had a big influence on men's lifestyles,' he adds. 'You could stay in touch with your mobile at the bar, but the sound of men drinking and laughing was not good for business.'⁴¹ Such changes partly informed the Club's decision to chase the function market, as it would be deemed more acceptable for workers to attend a function luncheon than to simply 'be out for lunch with the boys.'⁴² There was also a growing emphasis towards establishing evening attractions, while quite often new events promoted familial inclusion or were of a more cultured nature. The overall aim was to increase the patronage of Tattersall's: as the 1993 Annual Report stated, the policy was to try to 'programme functions which encouraged members to use their Club while maintaining several traditional ones.'⁴³

Of the traditional events, the Dinner Dance had been an important weekly fixture of Club life since the 1950s but, ominously, there had been several cancellations during Clelland's final years. In addition, the retirement of Daisy McLean in December 1988 – after some

³⁹ TCAR 1986 and 1996.

⁴⁰ Fry, 2015.

⁴¹ Jones, 2015.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ TCAR 1993.

thirty-three years of entertaining members and guests – marked the end of an era. McLean had been a key component of the event’s consistent success, and she departed in front of a capacity farewell crowd at a Dinner Dance held in her honour.⁴⁴ For Jones, the Dinner Dance was ‘one of the really good things’ in operation upon his arrival, although the event was in need of reinvigorating.⁴⁵ Themed dinner-dances were subsequently introduced and proved popular throughout the 1990s. An impressive range of themes were explored, from French, Mexican, Indian and Greek to Dixieland, Circus, the 1920s, and Country and Western. Food, décor and staff clothing were all prepared accordingly. Alongside Christmas, New Year and the race day dinner-dances, themed nights were the most well-attended of the year.⁴⁶ The traditional nature of the function endured, however, as Cauldwell recalls:

We would have a band – I’d loosely call it jazz – and it was numbers like *The Gypsy Tap*, *Moon River*...The parquet floor was polished every Friday, so of course you’d glide all over it. For the last dance of the evening we would pull a string and 300 balloons would float down and, of course, people loved it. The last song every night was *Advance Australia Fair*...It was just good old-fashioned fun, and a really happy atmosphere.⁴⁷

Despite the changes taking place, the Dinner Dance endured as an iconic Tattersall’s event that enabled members to share their Club with family and friends on a weekly basis. Its welcoming nature was also well suited towards the Club’s impending facilities that promoted wider accessibility. Wives and female guests, for instance, were allowed into the Members’ Bar from 6.30pm on the Dinner Dance evenings. In addition, while the event remained popular among the elder generations within Tattersall’s, it was also able to attract newer members. In fact, the Dinner Dance was more popular than ever during the redevelopment. In 1995, for example, fifty dinner-dances attracted almost 6,800 attendees, which resulted in an average capacity crowd of 140 patrons per week.⁴⁸

Other renowned events also continued to promote a family club atmosphere, while simultaneously achieving higher levels of service. The President’s At Home, for example, had become a black-tie event in the early 1980s but, amid the glazed hams, iced carvings, spectacular vines and fairy lights, a real sense of camaraderie was evident between both

⁴⁴ TCAR 1988.

⁴⁵ Jones, 2015.

⁴⁶ TCAR 1990-1996.

⁴⁷ Cauldwell, 2015.

⁴⁸ *Tattler*, 1 May 1984; TCAR 1995.

members and staff, who invariably joined in with the conga lines parading through the premises as the evening wore on.⁴⁹ Special events such as the Life Members' Dinner and the mixed Committee Dinner (for committeemen and their wives) went even further in regards to standards, with the Chandelier Room prepared up to two days in advance. The place cards and menus were all hand-written in fountain pen; little corsages were made for the women; the floral arrangements were set into candelabras; while the cutlery – which was all silver-serviced – and glassware were set to the ruler, with all serviettes and menus in exact line. As guests entered, they were greeted by a string quartet playing classical music and, once seated, there would be enough staff on hand to ensure that every course was served at exactly the same time for every guest present. While such events were perhaps a little bit more exclusive, this was also an era when members and their families and guests would be met at the door to the Club if attending a Dinner Dance. 'There was that gentle, rarefied atmosphere of being looked after in their Club,' recalls Cauldwell.⁵⁰

As membership increased, participation was encouraged in other staple events. Calcuttas in both the Melbourne Cup and Stradbroke Handicap – the latter introduced by Jones – maintained a Tattersall's tradition that often became oversubscribed. The 1988 Melbourne Cup Calcutta, for example, produced the largest pool in the Club's history.⁵¹ In the mid-1990s, the event had to move into the Members' Bar instead of the Dining Room to provide extra space. 'It was packed in so tight before that the food and drinks staff could barely get through,' recalls Cauldwell. The Tuesday Grill Night also experienced peak popularity and attracted 4,250 attendees in 1995 – an increase of almost 18% compared to the previous year – while over 5,000 attended during 1996.⁵² The Welcome to New Members evenings, meanwhile, were (perhaps unsurprisingly) so well patronised that the format had to be altered. Throughout 1996, the function was held every month – some 425 new members attended the May event – and the backlog became so formidable that the Club had little choice but to ask that neither proposers nor seconders attend, as had previously been customary.⁵³ Other long-standing but invitation-only events such as the Governor's Dinner –

⁴⁹ Cauldwell, 2015.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ TCAR 1988.

⁵² TCAR 1995 and 1996.

⁵³ *Tattler*, Winter 1996.

which, in 1993, was attended by Queensland's first female governor Leneen Forde – and the Senior Members' Luncheon also remained important features of the events calendar.⁵⁴



Fig. 55. Jonathan Cauldwell (then maître d') and an immaculately prepared Chandelier Room, 1994. (Photo: Rene Marcel).

⁵⁴ TCAR 1993.

The Father and Son Dinner was also reintroduced in 1987 and quickly proved popular. While extending the Club to members' families, it also helped to reinforce the idea of generational membership. Like most events at the time, the evening carried a degree of prestige. 'We'd have a guest speaker – usually a Wallaby or a cricketer or something – and they were black-tie,' recalls Caudwell.⁵⁵ The idea was made more inclusive when the Father and Daughter Dinner was successfully introduced in 1995.⁵⁶ The format also included formal dress and a guest speaker – and, in March 1996, the first ever fashion parade held at Tattersall's – alongside a live band and 'daddy-daughter dancing.' From 1996, both dinners were held twice a year.⁵⁷ In another move to welcome family (and females) into the Club, a Mothers' Day Luncheon was introduced in 1995. In addition, there were annual performances by Colin Harper and the Queensland Pops Orchestra held from 1993, which encouraged a mixed audience and, like several other new events, promoted evening activity at the Club. The sell-out shows – which had a 'Best of British' theme – were usually held over two or three evenings in July, and quickly became a highlight of the Tattersall's calendar.⁵⁸ They also marked the first concerts held at the Club since the final Smoke Concert in 1978.

Perhaps the biggest shift in the nature of the events at Tattersall's arrived in 1990 with the introduction of the Art Prize Exhibition. The occasion was curated by Bernie Hollet, who recalled its inception when speaking in 2009:

Early in 1990, I was called to Tattersall's to discuss the possibility of an art prize with Paul Jones. I was immediately enthused by his vision for a national competition and was keen to assist him and the Club with a project that would bring a cultural element to the activities of the Club. I doubt either of us would have thought at the time that the prize would gain so much public awareness and prestige.⁵⁹

After an open theme in 1990, the prize focused on landscape art. Since then, the first-place prize has risen from \$10,000 to \$30,000, and for many years it was the most valuable landscape art prize in Australia. Up to eighty artists have participated annually representing every state and territory, alongside numerous indigenous artists. It has attracted many winners and finalists of the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman art prizes, and such luminaries of

⁵⁵ Caudwell, 2015.

⁵⁶ TCAR 1995.

⁵⁷ TCAR 1996.

⁵⁸ TCAR 1993 and 1995.

⁵⁹ *Tattler*, Spring 2009.

Australian art as John Perceval, Fred Cress, Margaret Olley and Judy Cassab – herself a two-time Archibald winner.⁶⁰ The winning piece is purchased by Tattersall’s and, in the words of Hollet, has added ‘the names of many of Australia’s most important artists to the Club’s collection.’⁶¹ The opening night of the Art Prize quickly became a sell-out event at the Club for members and guests and, after its display at Tattersall’s in the first week of September, the exhibition began to go on show for the public at Waterfront Place in Brisbane’s Riverside precinct for two weeks.⁶² The Art Prize represented a type of function that the Club had not attempted previously, and its success quickly confirmed a new signature event that engaged both the membership and wider community, while making an obvious cultural contribution. Such a community-driven and culturally-minded approach was further supported by other initiatives, which included the \$2,500 Tattersall’s Club scholarships awarded to both male and female ballet students at the Queensland Dance School of Excellence in 1996.⁶³



Fig. 56. Tattersall’s Landscape Art Prize, introduced in 1990.

(Photo: Rene Marcel, 2001).

⁶⁰ *Tattler*, Winter 2014.

⁶¹ *Tattler*, Spring 2009.

⁶² *Tattler*, Winter 2014.

⁶³ TCAR 1996.

A major component of the redevelopment was the new function rooms that would enable the Club to pursue the external market with more assurance. Prior to the extension's completion in 1997, however, Tattersall's still offered a prestigious central location that was often utilised by groups outside the Club. Some occasions were clearly one-offs: in April 1984, for example, the French Consul held a cocktail party at Tattersall's for over 100 expats in Brisbane to meet two French senators who were touring Australia; while, in July 1987, the staff of Hutchinson's celebrated the builders' seventy-fifth anniversary at a special function held at the Club.⁶⁴ Various businesses and groups also made bookings at the Dinner Dance – including the NAB's Social Group, the Retired Officers' Association, and the Rotary Club of Brisbane – who all appreciated 'that Tattersall's Club provides a very good night out.'⁶⁵ With an increasing number of businessmen joining the Club and many city institutions employing Tattersall's members, the Club's appeal as a function venue was destined to become even stronger with additional and mixed facilities still to come.

Another major step towards the external function market was taken in 1989 with the decision to utilise the Club as a venue for weddings and receptions, with seventeen held the following year.⁶⁶ By 1996, over forty were taking place and catering for a total of just under 4,400 guests.⁶⁷ The increased frequency of weddings and other private functions justified the Club's proposed new function area as there was a clear demand to capitalise on. This shift also heralded a more commercial outlook in terms of the running of the Club – which was also reflected in Jones' new title of CEO by the mid-1990s – and the extra profitability from functions such as weddings was important for trade. For instance, net catering income rose by over \$175,000 in 1989 – a record increase at the time – and this was attributed to the growing number of functions being held.⁶⁸ Additionally, while profit from meals served in the Dining Room was very marginal owing to Committee policy, this did not apply to external events. While net revenue from catering averaged 1.7% of its annual turnover between 1981 and 1988, this rose to 16.4% over the next eight years and demonstrated the impact of a marketable catering strategy that was geared towards turning a profit.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ *Tattler*, 1 May 1984; *Tattler*, 7 July 1987.

⁶⁵ *Tattler*, 1 September 1984.

⁶⁶ TCAR 1989.

⁶⁷ TCAR 1996.

⁶⁸ TCAR 1989.

⁶⁹ TCAR 1988-1996.

Although net trading revenue dropped to below \$70,000 during World Expo '88, it rose every year thereafter and exceeded \$680,000 by 1996.⁷⁰ While this highlighted just how important it had been for Tattersall's to remain open throughout the redevelopment, it also demonstrated the positive impact of its extended function roster. The 1995 Annual Report specifically referred to this change in operation, noting that it had more than compensated for the drop-off in attendance at the bar in the evenings – a declining trend which had contributed to the Club's shift in focus towards functions in the first place.⁷¹ Overall, it appeared that the role of events within Tattersall's – whether old or new; or for members, their guests or external parties – was more prominent than ever at a time when the Club could anticipate further patronage upon the completion of its extended premises.

iv) Racing revitalised

The late 1980s and early 1990s represented a successful period in Tattersall's racing history, despite the declining trends that had previously become apparent in both race day attendances and the sport's role within the Club's identity. There were innovations introduced that, for a time, resulted in the TRC's race meetings becoming some of the most popular in the state, particularly among the younger generation.

In the late 1980s, Tattersall's decided to reinvigorate its June meeting which formed part of the state's Winter Carnival. Committeeman and renowned bloodstock agent John Foote – whose portfolio includes the legendary triple Melbourne Cup winner *Makybe Diva* as well as 2015 champion *Prince of Penzance* – recalls that while the TRC's race days were of a similar standard to the QTC meetings, the Club still sought further improvement: 'We decided to try to make them a bit more boutique, and to put on some races that could elevate to group-type status and do a bit better than the others – and we succeeded after a while.'⁷² The Australian Pattern Committee (APC) evaluate all national races – and there are over 20,000 per racing season – before recommending to the Australian Racing Board which ones qualify as either Listed, Group Three, Group Two or Group One races. These 'black-type' categories typically represent less than 3% of the total races run each season.⁷³ Foote adds that a lot of

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ TCAR 1995

⁷² Foote, 2016.

⁷³ 'About us,' Racing Australia, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://racingaustralia.horse/Aboutus/>.

work went towards encouraging sponsors to raise prizemoney – each group status has a minimum prizemoney requirement – which in turn attracted higher quality fields. ‘We got nearly all our races upgraded a little bit in their black-type status,’ he recalls.⁷⁴

Paul Jones was also involved alongside the Committee in trying to improve the Tattersall’s race days. ‘He was quite an avid racing man, and so he had close contact with the racing people – the breeders, trainers, jockeys – and got to be directly associated with them,’ remembers Graeme Fry. ‘Which allowed us to find out what they wanted on race days, and so we gave it to them – and that was when we got all the good fields.’⁷⁵ ‘I’d owned a couple of very good horses and I’d won some Group One races and so forth,’ confirms Jones. ‘It was always a great hobby of mine.’⁷⁶ Quite a few Tattersall’s members were also prominent breeders who had spoken of their desire to see a special race for fillies and mares, and the Queensland Trainers and Breeders Winter Stakes was subsequently created. The inaugural race took place in 1989, with *La Posette* winning the first prize of \$40,750.⁷⁷ Within three years the race had been granted Listed status, yet Jones continued to appear before the APC in Melbourne and a Group Three listing was subsequently approved in 1996.⁷⁸

In addition to the changes made in the racing content, Jones and the Committee worked hard to secure greater crowds and wider participation. ‘He used to give hundreds of tickets to hospitals and made sure all the nurses got free tickets,’ recalls Fry. ‘His idea was to get all the girls along to the races, and the fellas would follow – and it worked.’⁷⁹ A similar tactic had been employed during Ron Clelland’s time, when it was decided – as part of the TRC’s Recognition Stakes Day in December – to honour the city’s ‘hardest working service people,’ with tickets sent to hospitals across Brisbane to distribute among their staff.⁸⁰ The strategy certainly encouraged a resurgence of interest in the Club’s race meetings, and was further assisted by the decision to distribute additional complimentary tickets to the membership. When considering the standout feature of the race days during these years at the Club,

⁷⁴ Foote, 2016.

⁷⁵ Fry, 2015.

⁷⁶ Jones, 2015.

⁷⁷ *Tattler*, Winter 2002.

⁷⁸ TCAR 1993 and 1994.

⁷⁹ Fry, 2015.

⁸⁰ Clelland, 1991.

Foote recalls the sizeable crowds and their youthful component – although, naturally, this was an avenue that other racing clubs also explored:

We used to give out tickets to members for their sons and daughters and friends...And that probably went on until the mid-1990s. We had terrific crowds – bigger than the QTC, even though we rented their course. Some of them even rivalled Stradbroke...Then one day, probably in the late 1990s, the QTC decided to put on a young members' day a week or so before our meeting...So that was one of the things they did to try to take the crowd that we'd constructed.⁸¹

Following consistent crowds in the late 1980s, the race day attendances (and atmospheres) were even more encouraging for the TRC during the 1990s. While the June meeting, which featured the Winter Stakes, averaged an attendance of just under 8,500 in the five seasons between 1987 and 1992, it attracted almost 11,000 in 1993.⁸² The following year, 12,400 attended and this increased again to over 15,150 in 1995 – the highest turnout at a Tattersall's race meeting since 1968.⁸³ The June meeting comfortably averaged an attendance of over 10,000 for the remainder of the decade, which further demonstrated that the Club's innovative and constructive approach had secured a positive trend in race-day attendances at a time when they were falling worldwide. On the topic of racing, it should also be noted that the seemingly relentless decline in the number of bookmakers at Tattersall's had stalled, with the Club still holding twenty-five on its members' roll in 1997.⁸⁴ Admittedly, the bookmakers made up a very small fraction of a membership that had grown exponentially, yet they also further symbolised the resilience of the Club's racing roots.

v) Problems amid progress

With a surge in membership, a popular events calendar, and notable improvements taking place inside the Club, there was an air of positivity around Tattersall's throughout the 1990s. 'Drawings were put up on the north balcony, and then a model was put up of what the Club would look like,' recalls Cauldwell. 'It was all very exciting – everyone knew someone who knew something.'⁸⁵ Such enthusiasm was not shared among every single member, however, with a small degree of dissatisfaction apparent in day-to-day life at the Club. 'There were

⁸¹ Foote, 2016.

⁸² TRCAR 1987/88 - 1992/93.

⁸³ TRCAR 1993/94 and 1994/95.

⁸⁴ TCAR 1997.

⁸⁵ Cauldwell, 2015.

members who were absolutely against the change,' recalls Virginia Jenson, who was in regular contact with members in the Dining Room. Jenson also noticed a reticent attitude among some of the long-term members of staff.⁸⁶ The most troubling issue for many was the idea of significant change within a home away from home that had remained reassuringly stable for so many years. President Templeton acknowledged as much in 1996:

Your Committee is very conscious that many will want to see certain things stay as they have been for over seventy years. Those members can rest assured that the 'old' Club will remain exactly as it has been for many years...Their quiet enjoyment of the way things were will not be interfered with.⁸⁷

The increase in membership, particularly the rapid rises in the mid-1990s, was another cause of resentment for some within the Club. Whereas the long waiting list – which had been in place for decades – ensured a gradual assimilation for new members and little change for everybody else, a sudden influx of several thousand new members made such a process difficult to sustain. Indeed, membership at Tattersall's increased by 77% between 1988 and 1998.⁸⁸ 'I think we had a lot of people come in, and that was good for the coffers,' recalls Jonathan Bloxsom, who joined the Club in 1992. 'But the idea of having a waiting list for so long was that it was an education programme too. Your sponsors would bring you in and they'd show you that you're not supposed to do certain things.'⁸⁹ At the behest of the Committee, reminders of the rules were issued midway through 1996 to ensure both the comfort of members and preservation of Club standards.⁹⁰ Jones reiterated that the minimum dress requirement at Tattersall's was a coat and tie; he also reminded members that drinks were not to be taken from the bar through to the Dining Room, and that mobile phones were only to be used in the members' phone area next to the Billiard Room.⁹¹

This was followed by another announcement from Templeton regarding the need to maintain the Club's high standard of behaviour: 'The necessity to allow more members to join places a greater responsibility on all of us to ensure that Tattersall's remains one of the premier gentlemen's clubs in Australia.'⁹² It was no coincidence that such notices were

⁸⁶ Jenson, 2016.

⁸⁷ *Tattler*, Summer 1996.

⁸⁸ TCAR 1988 and 1998.

⁸⁹ Interview with Jonathan Bloxsom, conducted by the author, 15 March 2016.

⁹⁰ *Tattler*, Winter 1996.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Tattler*, Spring 1996.

issued during the only period in Tattersall's history when over 1,000 new members were admitted in two single years (1995 and 1996). Although a source of essential income, the membership drives conversely affected standards within the Club when service and material culture was otherwise at an all-time high. For many, this had a noticeable – if temporary – effect on the Club's prestige. 'There was an urgent need to pay for these extensions and a desperate drive for membership,' recalls Adrian Symons (senior member and Racquetees President). 'It was indiscriminate – basically anyone could become a member overnight, and I think that took a little bit of the exclusivity away and diminished the value a little bit.'⁹³ Looking to the future more broadly, Templeton expressed his 'fervent hope that nothing we have put in place by way of a new building will affect the spirit of Tattersall's,' which he highlighted as having been one of the Club's greatest strengths throughout its history.⁹⁴ Overall, there appeared to be very few negatives during a challenging period of transition which, for the most part, Tattersall's Club appeared to embrace and excel in. Nonetheless, these issues served as a useful reminder that such significant change could not be implemented without disrupting a stable and familiar sense of continuity.

Part Two: Conclusion

At the opening of its new clubhouse in 1926, Tattersall's had proclaimed itself to be one of the best clubs in the Commonwealth. Following its centenary year in 1983, however, it was apparent that Tattersall's had fallen behind the times and that change was necessary. Clubs around the world, many of whom held reciprocity with Tattersall's, offered mixed-facilities, accommodation, health centres and large function rooms. In addition, by the 1980s the Club's premises were already too confined for a growing membership that had exceeded 4,000 – a number matched by the formidable waiting list – and the limited facilities were predictably overstretched. The ensuing redevelopment of the Club's premises not only represents the most significant period of change in Tattersall's recent history, but also one of the most important decisions undertaken by the Club in terms of ensuring its survival.

⁹³ Symons, 2016.

⁹⁴ *Tattler*, Autumn 1997.

As Tattersall's sought to upgrade and modernise both its premises and operation, central to any proposal was its prized asset – the Arcade. Though a stable and integral feature of the Club's finances since 1926, by the 1980s the Arcade was in a deteriorating state while more modern, attractive shopping centres had emerged within the CBD. While Tattersall's had to protect an invaluable source of income, there was also a suspicion that the Arcade had been operating below its potential for some time having received only minor improvements since its establishment. As it was, the Arcade was hardly a major feature on Edward and Queen Streets and, if not improved, it would struggle to attract future tenants. For the Club, a rejuvenated Arcade was also essential to support further development of the premises, as its income would underpin the repayment of any long-term borrowings associated with the project. Indeed, the success of Stage One enabled the Club to plan and instigate a far more extensive second phase that would provide Tattersall's with the new facilities it needed.

The resulting process required more resolve and expertise than the Club's leadership had experienced for some time. Lengthy, arduous and often quite complicated negotiations took place on several fronts concerning property acquisition and financial support to ensure that the Committee had a viable project to sell to members – the redevelopment was, after all, dependent upon the approval of the membership. The attempts to procure and build upon the three corner sites faced competitive auctions and obstructive heritage laws, in addition to extensive discussions with the properties' owners – namely three state governments and, later, two separate banks. The undecided, perhaps unprepared nature of the Club's position when the Victorian building went to auction in 1989 could be forgiven, as Tattersall's had not faced such a significant decision for many decades. The most recent extensions to the premises had taken place in 1949, a comparatively straightforward purchase given that the building's owner, Bill Healy, was also the Club's president at the time. Despite multiple setbacks and much uncertainty, a persevering and professional approach was eventually rewarded when the necessary properties and financial backing for Stage Two were secured.

Although it was clear that changes were needed by the mid-1980s, it is difficult to be overly critical of the preceding era in the Club's history, which was a strong consolidatory period that laid the foundation for future change. Most notably, the demand for membership at Tattersall's had risen to an all-time high between the 1950s and the 1980s, and this placed the Committee in a strong position when it proposed a substantial rise in membership fees

in 1988. This extra income was important to the project, as was the Club's extensive waiting list that had gradually built up over the preceding decades. The Club was also able to capitalise upon its accumulated funds and investments from this time and, in particular, the rising land values in Brisbane's CBD, which strengthened the Club's position in negotiating funding for both stages of the development. Without such a period of continuity, therefore, it is doubtful that Tattersall's would have been able to instigate such considerable change.

During the redevelopment, life at Tattersall's reflected the transition between the old and new. The departure of the ubiquitous Clelland after twenty-five years marked the end of an era as the Club said farewell to one of its greatest servants, but with the arrival of Jones came fresh impetus and a sustained commitment to the Club and its future course. There were significant improvements in the Club's material culture and overall standards in advance of the new facilities, but not at the expense of its pleasant and welcoming nature. Traditional events such as the Dinner Dance and the Tuesday Grill Night reached new levels of popularity, while the luncheon remained a central component of Club life, and such occasions continued to embody the characteristic of friendship that Tattersall's was renowned for. A sporting identity also endured within the Club, from its racing activities – which appeared to strengthen during this period – to the customary visiting sportsmen.

The popularity of events at this time was assisted by the influx of new members, but it was still a positive reversal given the declining attendance trends witnessed at the Club throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. New attractions were also introduced such as the Best of British concerts, while other events encouraged wider – and mixed – participation such as the Father and Daughter Dinner. The Art Prize, meanwhile, demonstrated an emphasis on cultural engagement with the wider community. In addition, the Club began to embrace external functions, most notably with the introduction of weddings and receptions. Overall, Tattersall's was continuing to diversify while becoming noticeably less enclosed, in anticipation of new facilities that would accommodate an increased female presence and access for members' families and guests as well as those attending functions at the Club.

The redevelopment ultimately represented an institution that had rediscovered its sense of ambition, as the Club's leadership embraced the same philosophy that drove many of the earlier eras in Tattersall's history. Even so, the second loan of \$24 million was considerable and spoke volumes of the scale of the redevelopment and the determination to re-establish

Tattersall's among the world's best clubs. There appeared to be a collective understanding of the challenges facing the Club and the long-term vision required to redevelop, and by the close of 1997 Tattersall's was a vastly improved and expanded club. While an era of substantial change and progress had been successfully negotiated, the real challenge was about to begin – not least in adjusting to such transformation and utilising the changes effectively. While it was sensible to exercise a degree of caution, Tattersall's could at least enter the twenty-first century on the front foot, safe in the knowledge that it was much better-equipped than it had been when it entered its own new century in 1984.

Part Three

Tattersall's in the Twenty-First Century (1998 – 2015)

This final section concerns the position of Tattersall's Club in the twenty-first century. After the successful redevelopment of the Club's premises, Tattersall's appeared well-equipped to assume a more modern identity and operation. While this has largely been attained, the Club's recent history undoubtedly represents one of its most challenging periods. One area of particular turbulence concerned the divisive issue of female membership. This debate resulted from movements within Tattersall's amid wider social change, and was predictably the focus of much media attention. The Club also confronted real financial challenges, as it came to terms with managing the substantial debt associated with the redevelopment. In addition, Tattersall's faced significant losses in leadership and experience at the beginning of the century, which was itself the start of a difficult period of transition as the Club embarked on a more commercial operation whilst trying to maintain its traditional character.

There were also several worrying trends in membership that had emerged by the late 1990s. Like many clubs in Australia, Tattersall's was beginning to decline in numbers. While a historically high total of 7,250 members was reached in 1998, membership fell by more than 1,000 over the next four years.¹ The rate of decline in ordinary membership was of particular concern. Although there were 4,435 ordinary members at the turn of the century, less than 3,000 remained by 2006.² During the same period, the proportion of members in the senior and elder categories increased, which signified that the membership was also ageing. In addition, actual usage of the Club appeared to be decreasing at a rate which suggested it was a trend in itself, and not simply a consequence of there being fewer individuals to utilise the facilities.

No club can survive on both declining and ageing membership trends in the long-term, while the falling usage suggested that attracting new members might also be a problem. Such trends also carried other, less obvious threats. The ageing membership, for example, had financial implications due to member categories. In addition to senior members – who pay no fees after thirty-five years – a long term category was introduced in 1988, which halved fees after twenty-five years of membership (shrewdly extended to thirty years in 2014), in

¹ TCAR 1998 and 2002.

² TCAR 2000, 2002 and 2006.

addition to an elder member category that halved subscription for those aged over seventy. Of the 2015 membership, nearly 1,650 joined during the 1990s, and this represents a significant future decrease in revenue for the Club as those members complete thirty and thirty-five-year terms. In 2015, there were already over 1,500 members in the senior, long term and elder categories.³ On a more encouraging note, almost 900 members remained from those that joined between 2000 and 2009, while some 820 existing members joined between 2010 and 2015. This reflects more positively on the Club's modern-day appeal – and its recent membership drives – and offers some insulation against the loss of ordinary members, a category that has steadied at around 2,000 for the past few years.⁴

It should be noted that the twenty-first century has so far proven to be a difficult period for clubs in Queensland and Australia generally, especially in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) from 2008. It was reported in 2009 that Queensland clubs were 'doing it tough,' with the quiet scenes witnessed in the dining room and bar of the Brisbane Club typifying clubs throughout the state.⁵ The Polo Club instigated changes in an attempt to ensure its survival, including a concerted effort to try and attract younger members and increase its number of exciting events.⁶ Unfortunately, substantial annual losses continued alongside a declining membership base and, in 2015, the remaining members unanimously accepted a \$10 million offer for the Club's Mary Street premises.⁷ Having entered administration in January 2015, and then liquidation in October, the Queensland Irish Club also announced that it was to close in November 2015. Similarly, it sold its heritage-listed site on Elizabeth Street to pay off outstanding debts, and over 100 years of local club history disappeared.⁸

Of course, not all clubs have struggled or disappeared for the same reason. Many have different structures, while some have adapted better than others. Members of the Polo

³ Tattersall's Membership Business Plan, 2016 (document).

⁴ Data collated from current membership records.

⁵ 'Queensland clubs doing it tough during recession,' News.com.au, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://www.news.com.au/news/queensland-clubs-doing-it-tough-during-recession/news-story/433f5d4786a272be737eb8dbfbb1035d>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ 'Brisbane Polo Club sells heritage-listed CBD digs to Singaporean developer for \$10 million,' *Courier-Mail*, accessed 15 June 2017, <http://www.couriermail.com.au/business/brisbane-polo-club-sells-heritagelisted-cbd-digs-to-singaporean-developer-for-10-million/news-story/90be1363469abb4d7a3c3c0d2e18c97b>.

⁸ 'Queensland Irish Club to close after liquidators forced to sell heritage-listed building, *ABC News*, accessed 15 January 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-10/queensland-irish-club-doors-to-close-but-culture-to-stay/6926986>.

Club, for example, paid a substantial joining fee (\$4,000) and took responsibility for the payment of the monthly House Account, but did not pay annual subscription.⁹ This removed a regular source of income that most other clubs could rely upon. The Irish Club, meanwhile, reportedly suffered from years of ‘financial mismanagement’ before the GFC struck.¹⁰ It is fair to conclude, however, that the challenging climate increased the pressure on clubs. In Sydney, the American Club was forced into administration in 2012 for the second time in three years, following a period in which membership fell from 1,000 to just 400. In December 2011, membership at the Athenaeum Club in Melbourne dropped to 1,475 – its lowest since 1998 – as the number of members resigning (and passing away) began to exceed those joining.¹¹ A 2013 article in *The Australian* – aptly headlined ‘Clubs are losing their grip’ – suggested that, in addition to the fiscal downturn that saw investment banks, stockbroking firms, and law firms downsizing significantly, the problems facing some clubs extended to a lack of diversity and inclusion, as well as the comparatively cheaper and popular options of ‘pubs, sporting clubs, phones and social media’ for would-be members.¹² This is the climate within which Tattersall’s has been operating, and the Club has naturally encountered some of these broader difficulties as well as those of a more specific nature in its recent history. How Tattersall’s has adapted and responded to such challenges is explored throughout this section, along with the ever-present theme of change and continuity, as the Club has tried to shape and define its modern-day identity.

6. The Female Membership Debate

Despite its male-only policy, Tattersall’s has held a long association with women. A female presence was both sought after and evident from the Club’s earliest race meetings, while members were invited to share the first inspection of the Club’s new premises in July 1926 with ‘lady friends.’¹³ Though the Dining Hall of 1939 was restricted to members and male company, the mezzanine was purposely built to accommodate female guests at least once a week and was complemented with new cloak and cosmetic rooms. From the mid-1950s, the

⁹ ‘Queensland clubs doing it tough during recession.’

¹⁰ *Courier-Mail*, 1 September 2015.

¹¹ ‘Behind closed doors, clubs are losing their grip,’ *The Australian*, accessed 5 May 2016, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/behind-closed-doors-clubs-are-losing-their-grip/news-story/3a03caaf6c683d89bc75e50c86ef4b29>.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Brisbane Courier*, 24 July 1926, 10.

Ladies' Lounge was open from 10am to 10pm every day for bar service and morning and afternoon tea. Members' wives and female guests could use these facilities unaccompanied and invite a number of friends themselves.¹⁴ With the introduction of the Dinner Dance in 1956 and the President's At Home in 1958, alongside the surfeit of inclusive functions that appeared in the 1990s, Tattersall's Club was hardly the restricted male enclave one might suspect. All these instances of accessibility, however, were a by-product of a male's membership, and this is an important distinction. The only females that had regular access to Tattersall's, and who were not associated with a member, belonged to the Club's staff.

While there has undoubtedly been an increase in female presence throughout Tattersall's – and the Club has certainly become a more modern, accessible institution – a change in membership policy would still represent a significant shift and, rightly or wrongly, the end of a long-standing tradition. Indeed, the Club's male-only membership remains one of its most conspicuous characteristics. It is therefore unsurprising that the female membership debate reflects one of the most turbulent eras in the Club's history, with three separate votes conducted on the issue between 2003 and 2006. The debate represented a clear clash between the ideals of change and continuity within Tattersall's and, given its ongoing relevance, this period in time deserves careful consideration.

i) Context

Several male-only clubs in Australia have recently come under pressure from politicians and social commentators over their membership policies. The Athenaeum Club in Melbourne, for example, experienced intense public scrutiny during a bid for mixed membership in 2008, when several members – including senior diplomat Ian Wilcock – 'resigned in protest' following the motion's failure. Another member articulated a common riposte, however, when he queried why 'a group of people cannot come together to pursue lawful activities on private property and exercise the unfettered right to choose their company?'¹⁵ In 2010, Prime Minister Julia Gillard called on Governor-General Quentin Bryce to join her in lodging an application for a men's club in a show of defiance, while state premiers such as Steve

¹⁴ TCAR 1960.

¹⁵ 'Scandals and mysteries of clubland,' accessed online 20 May 2016, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/melbourne-life/scandals-and-mysteries-of-clubland-20120410-1wmtn.html>.

Bracks of Victoria have frequently urged such institutions to allow female membership.¹⁶ More recently, Attorney-General George Brandis was forced to defend his membership of Melbourne's male-only Savage Club in September 2014, when he told the Senate that there was nothing sexist about clubs operating their own membership policies.¹⁷ Ultimately, there is currently no law against private clubs maintaining a single-sex rule. In Queensland, a loophole within anti-discrimination laws exempts not-for-profit clubs, while the federal Sex Discrimination Act does not apply to single-sex clubs.

Several prominent private clubs within Australia have therefore maintained their membership policies in addition to the Athenaeum and Savage clubs, most notably the Australian Club (in both Melbourne and Sydney) and the Melbourne Club. Many other clubs have, however, made the change. The Newcastle Club voted almost unanimously to allow female membership in 1992, while the Kelvin Club in Melbourne and the North Queensland Club followed in 1995 and 1996 respectively.¹⁸ Sydney Tattersall's Club also decided to accept female members in 2014 and, in doing so, 'decided to join modern society' according to one article.¹⁹ More locally, the Brisbane Club approved the change in December 1998, and by 2015 around 30% of its membership was female.²⁰ In contrast, the Queensland Club – like many of the older, more traditional gentlemen's clubs in Australia – remains unwavering in its male-only membership policy.

Overseas, the issue is less topical, and it is worth mentioning that the majority of Tattersall's reciprocal clubs – of which there are now over 100 – offer mixed membership. Many of the most renowned institutions in the US have long accepted female membership. The New York Athletic Club did so in 1989, for instance, although this was only initiated in the wake of adverse state legislation.²¹ On the other hand, most of the traditional gentlemen's clubs in England have retained their male-only restriction. The membership policies throughout

¹⁶ *Herald Sun* (Melbourne), 6 March 2010.

¹⁷ 'George Brandis defends membership of men-only Savage Club,' accessed online 23 May 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-25/george-brandis-joins-savage-club/5769694>.

¹⁸ 'History of the Newcastle Club,' accessed 22 May 2016, <http://www.newcastleclub.com.au/History/>; 'About Kelvin Club,' accessed 22 May 2016, <http://www.kelvinclub.com/about/>; 'History,' accessed 22 May 2016, <http://www.northqueenslandclub.com.au/about/history>.

¹⁹ *The Sunday Telegraph* (Sydney), 26 July 2015.

²⁰ *Courier-Mail*, 1 September 2015.

²¹ '121 Years of Men Only Ends at Club,' accessed 21 August 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/07/28/nyregion/121-years-of-men-only-ends-at-club.html?src=pm>.

clubland rarely come under any real scrutiny, where a higher level of exclusivity seems to successfully counteract any publicity whatsoever. David Cameron's resignation from White's – the 'original old-boys club' – when leader of the opposition in 2008 is perhaps the only recent controversy. The attention also seemed to centre around the fact that he was said to have been the 'only member to have left the Club of his own free will,' as opposed to his declaration that all-male clubs did not fit his 'vision of modern Conservatism.'²²

Ultimately, there is no set rule or pattern surrounding the issue among clubs that are generally under no legal obligation to comply with social change or demand. Although some common change can be seen among private clubs in Australia since the 1990s, it is worth recognising that each club still retains its own history, traditions, rules and membership figures and demographics, and the process has evidently been easier at some institutions than others. The common factor regarding all private members' clubs is that, while within the law, it is up to the membership or elected leadership and management to propose the relevant changes in the rules, before the members ultimately vote on such a proposition.

ii) The redevelopment

Having toured some of the world's leading clubs in 1986 and 1988, CEO Paul Jones had formed definite views on the question of female membership:

It seemed ridiculous that 50% of the population were barred from using the Club except for the Dinner Dance and the President's At Home...Everything I noticed on the overseas tour of the other clubs were mixed – the best clubs in the world – and it seemed to me that we eventually had to catch up with them, that time was bound to catch up with us, and that there would be women members of the Club.²³

While the issue of female membership was not explicitly referred to by the Club's leadership during the redevelopment – which was already a confronting time for some members – it was clear that female usage of the Club would increase. President Templeton noted the 'very big change' in the way that the Club would be used in future, and later added that an increased female presence 'must surely be the way that members and their ladies will wish to go.'²⁴ The redevelopment was sold to members as essential for Tattersall's survival – it

²² 'Disowned by David Cameron,' accessed 15 January 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2369652/Disowned-David-Cameron-raffish-men-club-father-ran.html>.

²³ Jones, 2015.

²⁴ *Tattler*, Autumn 1997; *Tattler*, Winter 1997.

would increase revenue and maintain the Club's relevance in modern society, while it would also bring the Club into line with its reciprocal clubs around the world. Associated with this was the issue of female membership. 'In terms of the relevance of the building that we went through,' recalls Jones, 'it was designed so that all the facilities were female-friendly.'²⁵

These facilities included the new mixed dining area – the Healy Room – as well as the gym, swimming pool and spa. Many members had enquired 'about the ability to permit ladies into the restaurant,' and the operation of the new facility was, according to Templeton, 'in accordance with the wishes expressed in discussions with members.'²⁶ The Healy Room, which also offered a cocktail bar and afternoon tea, was duly made available for members' wives or partners to access by themselves and invite guests. While women had been able to access the Club previously, the mezzanine and Ladies' Lounge were comparatively segregated and did not offer the fine dining experience, surroundings and facilities of the Healy Room. In November 2000, membership agreed to allow women into the Members' Bar on Friday evenings, a condition that was relaxed further to weekdays from 2:30pm in 2004.²⁷ A Partner's Card was also in operation from the beginning of 2002, and 'had a marked impact on female usage' of the Healy Room and other facilities such as the Health Centre.²⁸ Overall, members appeared supportive of female access to the Club, which had become increasingly unrestricted aside from the Members' Dining Room at lunchtime, and this boded well towards the potential acceptance of female membership in the near future.

A formal survey regarding the issue was conducted under the outgoing Club president, John Maclean, at the beginning of 2002. Maclean stated that the survey was triggered by 'a number of approaches from members, particularly in relation to corporate usage of the Club for functions, seminars and accommodation.' The response indicated a solid poll in favour of female membership.²⁹ The significant addition of new members between 1988 and 1998 perhaps encouraged a more progressive outlook and an acceptance to break with certain traditions such as the male-only rule, especially given modern business practice. In an interview in 2000, Jones had even pointed to the increasing number of younger members

²⁵ Jones, 2015.

²⁶ *Tattler*, Summer 1996; *Tattler*, Winter 1996.

²⁷ *Courier-Mail*, 23 March 2005.

²⁸ *Tattler*, Autumn 2002.

²⁹ TCAR 2001.

aged between twenty-one and forty in relation to the growing demands to integrate women into the Club. 'This is the future,' he remarked.³⁰ The reality proved more complex. While the 1990s' redevelopment was the necessary catalyst for the debate to begin with the promotion survey in 2002, the same issue left the Club acrimoniously divided four years later.

iii) The first and second votes

The first vote regarding female membership at Tattersall's was held at the Club's 119th Annual Meeting on 25 March 2003. The motion was proposed by a member and had received thirty supporting signatures – the necessary process if seeking amendments to the Club Rules (the Committee could also submit its own proposals which members would then vote upon). The Committee urged everyone at Tattersall's to respect the collective decision of the membership and to continue to uphold the philosophy of the Club – Friendship is Life.³¹ 'We'd had this influx of members – the person who brought it up had been a member for two years or something like that,' recalls Graeme Fry, who was president at the time. Specific conditions were placed upon the voting process: any member who thought that 'they'd put a tick on a piece of paper and that would be it' were mistaken as attendance in person was required to cast a vote, with no postal votes or proxies permitted. The Committee abstained from taking a particular stance as it had decided to 'not try and influence the vote in any way.'³² In the end, the motion was defeated decisively, although some reports criticised the result as 'unfair and unrepresentative' and indicated that 'as few as 7.5% of members voted.'³³ Certainly, it was more difficult for country members – who made up one-fifth of Tattersall's membership – to personally attend the meeting than for those living in or around the city. Even so, the turn-out was disappointing. After all, if members really wanted change then all they had to do was show up and vote.

Discord within the Club quickly became apparent in the vote's aftermath. In April 2003, the Committee terminated the employment of CEO Greg Meek, who had replaced Jones in late 2000, before Meek subsequently commenced proceedings against the Club.³⁴ It was later reported that he had departed 'after continuing to bang his head against the conservative

³⁰ *On the Move* (Patrick Dixon Real Estate magazine), 4 November 2000.

³¹ TCAR 2002.

³² Fry, 2015.

³³ *Courier-Mail*, 1 March 2005.

³⁴ *Tattler*, Winter 2003.

wall of old members over the admission of women.³⁵ Whether this is entirely accurate or not is difficult to say. One committeeman at the time recalls a degree of misunderstanding regarding Meek's employment terms: 'He was saying things like he was given the job on the basis that he could implement female members. That wasn't ever put in front of the Committee, and it wasn't what our mandate was – it was to run the Club.'³⁶ Jones recalls handing over to his successor and advising him to not pursue the issue too aggressively:

I said to him that all the facilities were in place for women in the Club, and there was a vocal minority who were prepared to start going on about not having women members. It was inevitable that women would be allowed into the Club, and a groundswell would start up. But I thought that it was a little way off yet, and it was better to just keep your ear to the ground for now, and when the time was right he could say 'let's bring on the vote.' But he pushed it almost from day one.³⁷

Such insight should be tempered with the knowledge that Meek has not been afforded a right of reply. In any case, the debate itself continued before a second vote took place within two years at the Annual Meeting on 22 March 2005. A member had given notice of the motion, which was signed by nearly fifty others, while the Committee exercised its power to declare the proposal of such importance as to demand a postal vote.³⁸ 'It was presented twenty-one days before, so the membership knew what they were going to be voting for,' recalls Jonathan Bloxsom, who was on the Committee during all three votes.³⁹ President Peter Carroll stressed to the press that it was strictly a matter for the Club's constituency of just under 6,000 members.⁴⁰ Still, the *Courier-Mail* reported a 'sense of optimism permeating this latest attempt,' amid premature headlines that included 'Last male bastion set to fall.'⁴¹ Although a more representative 2,506 votes were received, the 1,246 members in support of the motion were narrowly defeated by the opposing 1,260.⁴² If only eight members had voted differently, there would be female membership at Tattersall's today. With such a fine margin, it seemed unlikely that the issue would subside. Immediately after the meeting, Carroll confirmed to the press that members had the right

³⁵ *Courier-Mail*, 11 December 2004; TCAR 2003.

³⁶ Interview anonymised, conducted by the author.

³⁷ Jones, 2015.

³⁸ TCAR 2004

³⁹ Bloxsom, 2016.

⁴⁰ *Courier-Mail*, 17 March 2005.

⁴¹ *Courier-Mail*, 1 March 2005; *Courier-Mail*, 17 March 2005.

⁴² *Courier-Mail*, 23 March 2005.

to put forward rule amendments prior to every annual meeting. Perhaps also sensing the backlash that was to come, he added: 'Please let me make it clear this is a result of a true democratic process, about the make-up of a private club by members of the Club.'⁴³

The debate did not resurface at the next Annual Meeting in 2006, though a motion was tabled that perhaps sought to prevent it from appearing again. A member proposed to raise the number of members required to alter the Club rules from thirty to 5% of membership. The Committee was against the proposal and made the alternative suggestion that 100 members should support a motion for it to go to vote, which was ultimately approved.⁴⁴ There were valid reasons to alter the procedure. Membership had grown considerably, and it was necessary to remove the potential for the same small group of people to propose the same issue year after year. The Committee's amendment was more reasonable, however, as the member's adjustment would have required almost 300 signatures and the associated canvassing to introduce proposals for future amendments. As it turned out, the changes were irrelevant in regard to the third vote as the Committee decided to forward the motion itself – a decision that significantly distinguished the final vote from the preceding two.

iv) The third vote

The Committee's decision to advance the motion of female membership suggested a united stance but, in reality, it was as divided as the rest of the Club. There was a shared consensus among most committeemen, however, that the current membership policy was damaging the Club's commercial operation and public reputation. This had already received plenty of press attention, particularly in the *Courier-Mail*. An article in late 2004 – headlined 'Tongues wag as CEO turns tail on men's club' – studied the 'tremendous backlash' against the Club's position by both government and local businesses, and also implied that the issue had triggered the departure of yet another Tattersall's Chief Executive, Matt Conroy.⁴⁵ The then CEO of the Bank of Queensland had reportedly pulled executives out of Tattersall's and refused to subsidise memberships, owing to the 'counter-productive' nature of an affiliation when many of his executives were female – views echoed by the NAB alongside various government ministers who refused to attend the Club thereafter. Many members believed

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ TCAR 2005.

⁴⁵ *Courier-Mail*, 11 December 2004.

female membership made ‘as much commercial sense as it does moral sagacity,’ especially given the resignation of prominent businessmen and the boycotting of the Club for functions by organisations ‘not wanting to be caught up in a tide of bad publicity.’⁴⁶ Carroll had first-hand experience of the harm inflicted upon the Club’s commercial operation:

In the last two years I was a partner at Deloitte, we used to come here for dinner for the partners’ meetings. And then we got to three or four female partners, and they objected strongly to supporting a ‘sexist club’ – the dinners were taken away. So, I thought ‘we are going to lose function income.’ And then there was indirect pressure applied to those professional firms...Ernst and Young, for example, will subsidise a partner’s membership fees but not if it’s a single-sex club. So, there has been a loss of membership from some of those professional firms that we used to get in the past.⁴⁷

Michael Sparksman, who was also present on the Committee across all three votes, remembers that Tattersall’s ‘was ostracised by many publicly-listed companies’ that refused to hold meetings and functions at the Club because of its decision not to allow female membership.⁴⁸ The spotlight on the policy also discouraged official political functions from taking place at Tattersall’s. The Club was banished from the Queensland Government’s official function roster under Premier Peter Beattie (1998-2007), even though Beattie was himself a member. In early 2006, Carroll remarked that ‘the Club could probably double in profit if we were included in the government’s functions.’⁴⁹ Although there was concern towards the loss of potential income, there were other reasons behind the Committee’s proposal beyond pecuniary interests. Michael Cassidy, who was on the Committee between 2004 and 2015, believed that the current policy unfairly deprived women of opportunities:

I supported the female membership proposals. While I do not have any daughters, the issue that really turned my thinking was the fact that if I had a daughter she would not be able to go to the Members’ Dining Room...She would be disadvantaged because I know that business deals are executed in that beautiful dining facility.⁵⁰

Sparksman similarly felt that the debate was representative of a larger issue for Tattersall’s, especially as its identity had become increasingly based around modern business practice:

It had to decide whether it would languish philosophically, and from a constituency basis, behind the field of what is otherwise the social norm, where women were accepted in board rooms and in every form of other professional and commercial life...

⁴⁶ *Courier-Mail*, 1 March 2005.

⁴⁷ Carroll, 2015.

⁴⁸ Interview with Michael Sparksman, conducted by the author, 11 August 2015.

⁴⁹ *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 7 March 2006.

⁵⁰ Cassidy, 2016.

An iconic club leads, it doesn't follow – the Club decided that to lead it had to make that decision, and we put it forward as a Committee for a vote of the members.⁵¹

The third vote was to take place at a Special Meeting at the Club on 19 December 2006, with postal votes again encouraged. The proposal was sent out to members on 16 November, and it is worth noting that the potential change – despite its significance – essentially concerned the alteration of a single word in Rule 4, with membership 'open to gentlemen persons of good character and repute whose admission, in the opinion of the Committee, will be compatible with the majority of existing members.'⁵² Formally written cases in favour and against the motion were also sent to members and, in outlining the key arguments, emphasised the contentious nature of the debate. The case in favour focused on Tattersall's need to maintain its leadership and contribution within the community, to be progressive, and to maintain its position of prestige and prominence as a club of enviable reputation. It was also argued that the Club stood to lose status in the continued absence of influential women in professions, government, commerce and sport. The changes in contemporary business in particular, with significant leadership and senior management roles filled by women, should be matched by an amended constitution.⁵³ One press report highlighted that Tattersall's membership at the time included '17 judges, 219 managing directors, 481 accountants, 38 stockbrokers, 49 doctors, 97 architects, 510 solicitors and 140 barristers' – all professions in which women had made significant advances.⁵⁴ The case in favour also highlighted that the Club's motto, Friendship is Life, should include welcoming women as members, while it was also argued that institutions such as the Brisbane Club had undergone a similar change 'without comprising its culture, ideologies or traditions.'⁵⁵

The case against highlighted that Tattersall's had prospered for 140-years under its current membership structure, and suggested that its male-only membership policy was the basis upon which some members may have joined. Consequently, there was a risk of alienating or losing male members to the financial detriment of the Club if the motion succeeded. It was also highlighted that Tattersall's was maintaining a legitimate right in the association of people of the same gender – something that women-only clubs and associations also

⁵¹ Sparksman, 2015.

⁵² Rules of Tattersall's Club, 2016 (document).

⁵³ Memorandum issued to members October 2006 (document).

⁵⁴ *Courier-Mail*, 11 December 2006.

⁵⁵ Memorandum, October 2006.

celebrated, but which was rarely attacked in the media. Furthermore, as a private and democratic institution, Tattersall's should not allow social commentators to dictate its rules. The case against also pointed out that the Club was currently achieving record profits and exceeding the required repayments on its debt. In addition, despite the stance of some corporations and politicians, it was actually enjoying increased revenue from functions. Finally, given that two votes on the same issue had recently taken place, it seemed inappropriate to reconsider the same motion yet again in such a short space of time.⁵⁶

Some press reports again suggested that female membership at Tattersall's was a formality, with headlines such as 'Battle of the sexes ends' appearing a full seven weeks before the vote took place. The article in question declared that members were 'expected to approve the change because it has the backing of the Committee.'⁵⁷ Carroll was cautiously optimistic: 'I'm confident the membership will endorse this recommendation – we believe it is entirely appropriate in this day and age to welcome women into the Club,' though he also conceded that members would ultimately 'make up their own minds.'⁵⁸ Such positivity was in contrast to the high degree of tension and unhappiness throughout Tattersall's at the time. 'It was a terrible time for the Club,' recalls Bloxsom. 'Members would speak of each other at the Club and be at each other's throats – it was unstable.'⁵⁹ Prior to the vote, an opposing member reportedly spoke aggressively to Carroll 'as he attempted to eat his lunch and grabbed him by the arm during an angry encounter.'⁶⁰ Within the Committee, relations were also strained. 'I didn't know what the vote was until they announced it onstage that night,' says Bloxsom, 'so there were some interesting times, and a bit of division in the Committee.'⁶¹

As a considerable media presence waited outside Tattersall's, inside the Club it was declared that the vote had once again gone against the motion for female membership. Moreover, a majority of members had defied the Committee's recommendation. One report – headlined 'Men's club shuns ladies' – claimed that a ballot of 3,260 members had resulted in a victory

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ *Courier-Mail*, 1 November 2006.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Bloxsom, 2016.

⁶⁰ *Courier-Mail*, 11 December 2006.

⁶¹ Bloxsom, 2016.

by 106 votes for those opposing the motion.⁶² This appeared conclusive enough for the matter to be put to rest, and it has yet to be formally reconsidered within Tattersall's Club.

v) Why did the third vote fail?

There were a number of factors which influenced the final result, but certainly the most controversial aspect of the third vote was the Committee's decision to recommend the motion. Its support of female membership arguably created a problem from the moment it was announced, as members against the motion were given cause to strengthen their resolve. 'It was a no-brainer that if the Club forced the issue on the members,' says Jones, 'they would get their backs up and the majority would vote against women membership – and that's exactly as it turned out.'⁶³ Cassidy duly confirms that 'when the main Committee proposed it, there was a faction created within the Club.'⁶⁴ Bloxsom had also been particularly against the issue being put forward as a Committee nomination:

I'd been through two of these, and they're very divisive – it doesn't matter which side you're on. I tried to explain that, but they wanted to pursue it and be on the front foot. As a Committee, we shouldn't be voting at all – it's up to the members to tell us what they want because we're running their Club. If they want it, we'll implement it.⁶⁵

Following the announcement, there was also the problem of the official cases in favour and against the motion, and who would write them before they were sent to members. 'The Committee was so embarrassed by the "no" vote that we couldn't allow it to go as it was then written,' remembers Sparksman. 'Because it might slip into the newspaper, and we felt that if they'd published their own argument, even the "yes" vote would have been shamed by it because it was almost incomprehensible – so I was asked if I could write both cases.'⁶⁶ The decision to engage Sparksman, a lawyer, to write both arguments was understandable, especially in the face of the distasteful propaganda against the motion which included e-mails headed 'No tits for Tatts.'⁶⁷ However, even though a respectable case against was drafted, it was noticeably shorter than the argument in favour and, unsurprisingly, did little to appease those actively running against the motion who effectively funded a professional

⁶² *The Chronicle* (Toowoomba), 21 December 2006.

⁶³ Jones, 2015.

⁶⁴ Cassidy, 2016.

⁶⁵ Bloxsom, 2016.

⁶⁶ Sparksman, 2015.

⁶⁷ *Courier-Mail*, 11 December 2016.

campaign to ensure its failure. ‘That particular faction lobbied very hard and aggressively against the female issue,’ recalls Cassidy.⁶⁸ Sparksman goes further in his criticism: ‘There were a number of members who I felt conducted themselves inappropriately, as they had allowed the membership database to be given to proponents of the “no” argument, who then canvassed their views in a very passionate way.’⁶⁹ A similar tactic had also been employed during the voting process at Sydney Tattersall’s in 2013, when ‘internal espionage’ – which included database hacking and e-mail electioneering – temporarily derailed its transition towards accepting female membership.⁷⁰

Another likely influence upon the outcome was the division within the Committee itself, which was then leaked through the press. The opposition of three committeemen was the subject of an article midway through the two-week voting period by member Des Houghton of the *Courier-Mail*. One of those named was Bloxsom, who was vice president at the time.⁷¹ ‘I wasn’t against the idea,’ clarifies Bloxsom, ‘I was against the Committee putting it forward.’⁷² Nonetheless, for Sparksman the impact of the article was considerable:

Up until that point it was seen as the united position of the Committee. The voting pattern, which we knew because we were progressively counting, was generally in favour during the first week; and in the second week that trend reversed, especially among the younger members, and we attribute that to the fact that Jonathan was due to become the president of the Club and he did not represent the Committee’s view in favour of female membership.⁷³

Ironically, Houghton’s motive was to reinforce the argument in favour of the motion. Regardless, the episode only highlighted the naïve assumption among the Committee that a position of unity could be maintained. It was unrealistic to assume that ten individuals could truly feel the same way on an issue that was so contentious, and as division leaked through the Club – and then the press – it only set an example of disharmony for the membership.

While the Committee’s decision to recommend female membership proved problematic, however, it was also quite understandable. The attempt by some members at the 2006

⁶⁸ Cassidy, 2016.

⁶⁹ Sparksman, 2015.

⁷⁰ *Sydney Times*, 26 July 2015.

⁷¹ *Courier-Mail*, 11 December 2016

⁷² Bloxsom, 2016.

⁷³ Sparksman, 2015.

Annual Meeting to amend the rules revealed a faction within the Club that sought to prevent the female membership issue from ever being raised again. Reports following the second vote had also painted a picture of ‘bar-room bullies who spent their energies whipping up votes to lock women out.’⁷⁴ Such developments forced the Committee’s hand to take a strong stance in counteracting such movements. Although the faction probably campaigned against female membership more aggressively as a result, there is no guarantee that it would have not done so anyway given how close the previous vote had been. There would have also been a genuine belief among the Committee that, in carrying the motion, it could influence the outcome in a positive way and simultaneously reduce external pressures from social commentators. It should not be forgotten that the first two votes failed without committee support (although some might argue that the second vote showed momentum was already swinging towards accepting female membership). Lastly, the Committee was in many ways simply following in the footsteps of its predecessors. Past committees had also advanced significant change in the belief that it was in the best interest of the Club and its future, and the Committee’s decision was similarly brave – if seemingly detrimental.

Although such decisions had an impact on the result – along with other factors including the aggressive canvassing and untimely press reports – the issue alone divided Tattersall’s and its membership, which only became more pronounced through the referendum process (as is often the case). The motion for female membership ultimately failed on each occasion because a majority of members voted against it, and it should not be forgotten that there were a variety of personal reasons and opinions behind each individual vote.

vi) Aftermath and legacy

Press coverage was predictably critical in the aftermath of the motion’s failure, with a queue of people waiting to condemn Tattersall’s Club. While Premier Beattie vowed ‘to stay and keep voting until it gets up,’ other political figures were less diplomatic. In addition to Liberal Leader Bruce Flegg’s condemnation of the Club, Queensland National Party Director Michael Evans said that excluding women as members was ‘nonsense,’ while Federal Labour MP Gary Johns added that ‘the days are long gone when women can be pushed aside.’ Queensland’s Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Susan Booth urged state government

⁷⁴ *Courier-Mail*, 3 March 2005.

legislation to force men-only clubs such as Tattersall's to accept female members, though strangely she also asserted that any change should not affect existing women-only clubs.⁷⁵ Local businesswoman Sarina Russo, a vocal supporter of the motion, concluded that it was 'a very sad night for Brisbane, Queensland and Australia,' and added that 'the thought of not allowing women in a business club in today's world is just unacceptable.'⁷⁶

Internally, the Club tried to move on. Immediately after the vote, life member Eric Oxenford declared to the press: 'The Committee will be gone...we will throw the Committee out!', and while this reflected the displeasure among some members regarding the Committee's motion, such a threat did not materialise.⁷⁷ Sparksman resigned from the board: 'It wasn't a protest – it was simply a decision that those people who felt that the Club should go in that direction ought to immediately put their names forward and become members of the Committee.'⁷⁸ Carroll also departed as president a few months later, but that was only because he had served his three-year term. With many members reportedly 'sick and tired of the female debate and associated press ridicule' – many had abstained from voting at all – Bloxsom was focused upon pulling the membership back together as president.⁷⁹ 'It was just a matter of bringing back some fun times into the Club,' he reflects, 'and not even bringing up those issues.'⁸⁰ There was one noticeable rule change at the 2008 Annual Meeting, however, which declared that five years had to pass before a failed motion could be re-submitted.⁸¹ While Sparksman concedes that 'you can't bombard people with a revolution until they get sick of it,' he does feel that resolutions such as these are 'designed to prevent women from ever becoming members.'⁸²

More recently, in 2015 the Club was still receiving resignations from members citing the female membership issue – sometimes on a weekly basis – while honorary membership was also frequently turned down for the same reason. In a period of negative membership trends and usage, the outcome of the debate has hardly helped to turn the tide. A similarly

⁷⁵ *Courier Mail*, 21 December 2006.

⁷⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 December 2006.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Sparksman, 2015.

⁷⁹ *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 6 March 2006.

⁸⁰ Bloxsom, 2016.

⁸¹ TCAR 2007.

⁸² Sparksman, 2015.

adverse impact has been witnessed elsewhere: At the Athenaeum in Melbourne, for example, a fall in membership ‘coincided with the embarrassing stash over women’s membership.’ In comparison, Sydney Tattersall’s was reportedly ‘back in the black’ and booming in numbers by 2015, a change partly attributed to its decision to accept female members the previous year.⁸³ Alongside the ongoing and intangible loss of function income and potential members from institutions that have effectively blacklisted Tattersall’s, it is clear that the membership policy still casts a shadow over the Club today. In addition, it calls into question the identity and purpose of the modern-day Tattersall’s Club: If it is now more of a business club, then it should perhaps reflect the modern professional world more accurately and embrace its most influential figures as members – regardless of gender.

Tattersall’s remains a private members’ club, however, and its membership policy is not subject to equal opportunity laws. It is the right of its elected and paying membership to approve or refuse such proposals. The Club itself instigated the potential acceptance of female membership – when it was under no legal obligation to do so – with two votes driven by its membership and a third advocated by the Committee. Outsiders may have the right to criticise the motion’s failure, but the process was generally fair and democratic, and members are entitled to their respective opinions. Nonetheless, the episode represents a damaging period in the Club’s history. In addition to the internal disharmony, Tattersall’s arguably received its most negative press coverage since the Arcade’s SP betting days of the 1930s, particularly from the *Courier-Mail* (which still possesses the highest circulation in Queensland). While Tattersall’s is now more accessible to women than ever before, for many the defeated motion has created an unwelcome and inaccurate impression of the Club – further perpetuated by the adverse media attention – and this remains detrimental.

Any future debate would probably be enhanced by stricter conditions to prevent aggressive electioneering on either side of the argument, though at the same time open discussion should be encouraged. A less aggressive stance from journalists and those outside the Club would also be of benefit. Articles that simply attack Tattersall’s and its members only serve to unfairly generalise many within the Club and probably augment a sentiment among members to deny such commentators any sense of victory in the process. No club will

⁸³ *Sunday Telegraph*, 26 July 2015.

respond positively to premeditated sound-bites by the likes of former Victorian Attorney-General Rob Hulls – specifically that men-only clubs are ‘amusing relics’ filled with ‘crusty old fogeys and young fuddy-duddies’ – and it seems futile making them.⁸⁴ In the end, it will be the members’ decision as to whether female membership will eventuate at Tattersall’s, not one dictated by those outside its parameters. ‘I don’t know whether it will or won’t one day,’ reflects Bloxsom. ‘It probably will, but the Club is bigger than that.’⁸⁵

Though it occasionally resurfaces, media scrutiny of the Club and its membership policy has subsided since 2006. There was widespread coverage when the Liberal National Party (LNP) held its International Women’s Day function at Tattersall’s in 2015, but criticism (along with a sense of incredulity) was mainly directed at the party’s decision as opposed to the Club itself. ‘Right now, nobody cares,’ remarks Carroll. ‘I can’t see it being resurrected – there’s no push from our membership base or outside.’⁸⁶ Contrarily, Sparksman is unequivocal that the issue remains relevant. ‘Basically, half the Club agreed with it, so it can’t be ignored. Those people are still there – it’s sitting there as an issue.’⁸⁷ Likewise, those who fiercely lobbied against the motion are also present. ‘That faction still exists today,’ claims Cassidy, ‘and has over many years unsuccessfully supported candidates for committee positions.’⁸⁸ The dilemma facing Tattersall’s is that as the issue remains pertinent it will inevitably resurface and intensify but, given its traumatic and divisive nature, the Club is understandably reluctant to actively engage with the debate again anytime soon.

Ultimately, the male-only tradition regarding membership remains a significant component of Tattersall’s modern-day identity, and one of its longest continuities. As Carroll highlights, ‘people who join now are quite conscious of the topic and make a conscious decision to join the Club, because it is – into the foreseeable future anyway – a single-sex club.’⁸⁹

⁸⁴ *Herald Sun*, 3 June 2010.

⁸⁵ Bloxsom, 2016.

⁸⁶ Carroll, 2015.

⁸⁷ Sparksman, 2015.

⁸⁸ Cassidy, 2016.

⁸⁹ Carroll, 2015



Fig. 57. A selection of Courier-Mail newspaper articles relating to the female membership debate at Tattersall's in the early twenty-first century. (Photo: Courier-Mail, various 2003-06).

7. Challenge and Response

While the preceding discussion covers a traumatic period for Tattersall's, it was far from the only difficulty facing the Club in the early twenty-first century. Serious financial challenges confronted Tattersall's, from the management of its significant debt to the impact of the GFC, while the Club also suffered a substantial loss of leadership as it attempted to implement more of a commercial focus. Problematic trends regarding a falling and ageing membership – and general usage of the Club – have also been apparent, while the heritage of Tattersall's came under threat as it faced untold difficulties in trying to sustain its thoroughbred racing activities. This chapter analyses the response of Tattersall's to these challenges, which included strengthening its financial management, improving its leadership structure and performance, encouraging a new wave of subsidiary clubs, and rejuvenating its events calendar while embracing a growing corporate and private functions operation.

i) Finance

There are two common ways in which a club like Tattersall's can face financial ruin: One, if its liabilities exceed its assets – so, for instance, if its debts surpass the value of the Club's land and property; and two, if the Club is unable to pay its bills. Although Tattersall's net assets comfortably exceeded \$20 million from 1996, the threat of insolvency became more pertinent in the aftermath of the redevelopment and its associated debt.¹

Within one year of opening its new extensions, it was clear that Tattersall's needed more money to meet its liabilities – the loss of \$108,000 in 1997 was its first annual deficit since 1952.² The Committee refinanced the Club's loan in 1998, and while it could take advantage of a reduced rate of interest at 8.3% (from 12%), there was a \$2.5 million 'break-cost' levied. There was also a \$400,000 payment on the principal to be made each year, which would soon rise to \$500,000. In addition, rentals from the Arcade had not risen as forecasted in 1994, and its occupancy had also suffered from building delays. In response, a \$150 increase in members' subscription fees was proposed and approved at the Annual Meeting in March 1998. It was predicted that the rise, which President Templeton conceded was controversial, would generate an additional \$750,000 per year.³ The proposal was

¹ TCAR 1996.

² TCAR 1997.

³ Ibid.; TCAR 1998.

contentious as it was raised retrospectively, which meant that members suddenly found themselves in arrears. Under normal circumstances, such a change would come into effect at the next annual payment. As Templeton stressed, however, the Club needed the money for that financial year, and the sense of urgency appeared to convince most members.⁴ Subscription income subsequently rose from \$1.8 million in 1997 to \$2.75 million in 1998, which helped to ensure that the Club could at least post a small profit of \$37,100 that year.⁵ The full leasing of the Club's property in 1999 also brought in significant additional income. The Arcade and lower level leases produced a profit of \$1 million, compared with \$633,500 in 1998.⁶ Another loss of \$340,000 was recorded in 2000, however, primarily due to the crippling debt repayments.⁷ The Committee's solution was to propose another \$100 increase in both subscription and entrance fees, which was approved at the Annual Meeting in March 2001. Annual subscription, which was now just under \$700-per-year for each member, brought in an additional \$478,000 that year, and the total of \$3.35 million generated from the 6,678 Tattersall's members remains a record as of 2015. The increase helped to prevent the Club from posting a second successive annual loss, with a profit of just over \$100,000 recorded in 2001.⁸ The Club had, however, relied heavily upon raising its membership fees to effectively stay 'in the black' in the years following the redevelopment, and the Committee must have known that such a strategy could not go on indefinitely.

Tattersall's financial position was placed under further strain following a dispute with Hutchinson's, the Club's long-term builders. The completion date of 30 May 1997 for the new building was, according to the Club's architects, four months later than the contractual date agreed. Having absorbed the financial burden of these delays, Tattersall's deducted liquidated damages of \$577,700 from the payment due to Hutchinson's. In turn, the builders disputed the Club's entitlement and claimed to be owed additional sums beyond the \$14.6 million paid under contract.⁹ Tattersall's was advised that costs amounting to \$1.6 million would be incurred if the dispute proceeded to trial, and that was without taking any judgement into account. The Club successfully obtained a court order to ensure the case

⁴ *Tattler*, Winter 1998.

⁵ TCAR 1998.

⁶ TCAR 1999.

⁷ TCAR 2000.

⁸ TCAR 2001.

⁹ TCAR 1999.

went to mediation, and the dispute was resolved in September 1999. Tattersall's agreed to pay Hutchinson's \$1 million within thirty days, along with an annual sum of \$100,000 for four years. The Committee portrayed the result as something of a success, given the Club's maximum exposure and the potential court costs. However, it also conceded that the outcome was far from perfect.¹⁰ The saga had placed a further burden upon the Club's leadership in the two years following completion of the redevelopment – itself a strenuous time for many of the same individuals. Worse still, the outcome meant further expenditure for Tattersall's at a time when it was still coming to terms with its significant debt.

This debt was now primarily owed to Suncorp-Metway – both the state-owned QIDC and Suncorp had merged with Metway Bank in 1996 – and stood at \$25 million in 2002.¹¹ Interest on the loan remained enormous with \$2.16 million paid that year, alongside \$500,000 on the principal and the additional \$100,000 to Hutchison's. Nonetheless, Tattersall's was still able to declare a profit of almost \$330,000. Income from subscription had remained substantial at over \$3 million, while the Arcade also contributed \$2 million in revenue – which, encouragingly, was twice the amount that was received in 1999.¹² Over the next few years, steady income from both sources helped the Club to post an average annual profit of around \$300,000.¹³ While a consistent and welcome return, the Club still needed to increase its cash reserves. In addition to the burden of its debt repayment, there were mounting costs in its day-to-day operations and capital expenditure to contend with.

On occasion, there were real liquidity issues facing Tattersall's, particularly as the income from subscriptions was only received annually. Michael Cassidy, who became treasurer in 2004, recalls his predecessor having to use personal credit cards to meet urgent liabilities. 'It was the only way the Club could pay accounts,' he says.¹⁴ Even then, some creditors were not being paid. A lack of reserves was also evidenced by the downturn in maintenance within the Club. 'In those days, we were spending only \$70,000 to \$80,000 on repairing the building,' recalls Cassidy.¹⁵ Jonathan Bloxsom adds that upkeep consisted of 'a lot of band-

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ TCAR 1997 and 2002.

¹² TCAR 1999 and 2002.

¹³ TCAR 2003, 2004 and 2006.

¹⁴ Cassidy, 2016.

¹⁵ Ibid.

aid stuff' during his first few years on the Committee.¹⁶ Air-conditioning, for example, would routinely break down in the middle of summer with significant delays in repairs. 'The outcome is, of course, unsustainable as the asset deteriorates,' warns Cassidy.

Unsurprisingly, maintenance and repairs became a priority once finances improved, and by 2006 designated funds had increased to around \$400,000 a year.¹⁷ Although this reduced the Club's profits, upkeep within Tattersall's was obviously vital for both the Club's operation and the survival of the buildings, and the fact that it was marginalised for several years out of financial necessity highlights just how cash-strapped the Club had become.

Tattersall's was still able to post a profit of over \$500,000 in 2006, and this figure increased every year thereafter until 2014, by which time profit had risen to \$1.3 million.¹⁸ This vast improvement in the Club's annual return was attributable to several factors. Certainly, Tattersall's had begun to focus on its finances with more expertise than ever before. This was evident within the Finance sub-committee – consisting of Cassidy, Stuart Fraser, and Des Whybird – which instigated the Club's first five-year strategic financial plans in 2004 and updated the Club's forward estimates each year.¹⁹ Such proficiency also enabled Tattersall's to successfully renegotiate its loan repayment agreement following the expiration of its ten-year deal with Suncorp-Metway in 2007. The Club sought a new arrangement that adopted both fixed and floating rates, with differing maturity dates, to better diversify the risk. While the NAB were excluded from discussions – there was still acrimony over the decision of the Club's former bankers to not support Stage Two of the redevelopment – a new ten-year deal was agreed with Westpac that met the Club's requirements.²⁰

The new agreement also continued to lock Tattersall's into principal annual repayments of \$500,000 plus interest. As is generally the case with any substantial long-term loan, if regular payments are not being made on both the principal and the interest, any hope of actually reducing the debt evaporates. For Cassidy, the new arrangement also had an important impact within the Club as it maintained discipline in spending over a continuous period: 'Committee's don't have *carte blanche* to make decisions with members' funds.'²¹

¹⁶ Bloxson, 2016.

¹⁷ Cassidy, 2016.

¹⁸ TCAR 2006-2014.

¹⁹ TCAR 2004.

²⁰ TCAR 2009; Cassidy, 2016.

²¹ Cassidy, 2016.

The first call on income was therefore debt repayment, while the ability to spend money on less prioritised items was restricted. Suggestions to buy golf courses, for instance, were instantly dismissed out of necessity. 'We were giving higher priority – and it was approved in the strategic plan – to reduce the debt,' confirms Cassidy. 'I believe the strategy had the most positive impact on the Club during that time, though it took cash away admittedly.'²²

The timing of the renegotiation also worked in Tattersall's favour, as the GFC struck the following year in 2008. As the ten-year deal was already in place, the Club was buffered from the standard practice at the time of banks threatening to cancel loans or insisting upon renegotiation under less favourable conditions. In early 2008, a senior Westpac banker tried this tactic at a Tattersall's Committee meeting in the hope that the arrangement might be reduced to three years. 'He quickly left with his tail between his legs,' recalls Cassidy, as the Committee explained the contractual agreement in no uncertain terms. 'The reality is that many clubs within Brisbane have found banks to be deadly when there is an inability to repay debts,' adds the former treasurer. 'This should always be of major concern within the club industry generally.'²³

While such negotiations and strategies were of the utmost importance, another decisive factor that significantly benefited the Club's financial situation was the improved returns in the Arcade. Its income had increased from around \$2 million in the early 2000s to over \$3 million by 2009.²⁴ By 2015, the Arcade's revenue exceeded \$4.5 million.²⁵ A high percentage of property income – usually between 80% and 90% – is profit for the Club. Of the 2013 revenue of \$4.12 million, for instance, over \$3.55 million was recorded as profit.²⁶ The upward trajectory of the Arcade's performance – with an 130% increase in its profit between 2004 and 2015 – underpinned the overall improvement in Tattersall's financial position, and between 2012 and 2015 the Club averaged an annual profit of nearly \$1.2 million.²⁷ Of course, it was not just the flourishing Arcade that improved the Club's balance

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ TCAR 2009.

²⁵ TCAR 2015.

²⁶ TCAR 2013.

²⁷ TCAR 2004-2015.

sheet, but it was clearly a prominent factor. While in 2006 revenue from the Arcade represented 22% of the Club's total income, by 2013 it accounted for nearly 33%.²⁸

This increased revenue has also been pivotal in repaying the Club's outstanding loan. The new agreement with Westpac in 2007 ensured that the total repayments were indexed against the rentals in the Arcade, so Tattersall's would only pay additional sums if the net returns increased from its commercial asset.²⁹ This again ensured that debt reduction was the main priority, and it was effective – but only because the Arcade and ground level leases performed so well. In 2007, Tattersall's paid an additional \$550,000 on top of the principal and interest payments, and this was predominantly from cash that was generated through the Arcade. Including the principal payment, this reduced the outstanding debt by over \$1 million in a single year for the first time.³⁰ As the debt decreased, interest on the loan also receded from a crushing \$2.1million in 2004 to a more manageable \$735,000 by 2015.³¹ The Arcade's significant profit, alongside the Club's debt-reduction strategy, had therefore effectively freed up \$1.4 million from interest payments in ten years – while the debt itself had fallen to below \$12 million, a reduction of over 50%.³²

Ultimately, the Arcade's position as Tattersall's most valuable asset has never been stronger than in recent years. This can be aptly demonstrated by studying its relationship with the debt. While the Arcade has helped to ensure a continuous reduction in the outstanding amount owed, its own value has risen simultaneously. In 1999, the Club's debt of \$25 million exceeded the value of the Arcade – then \$20.5 million. By 2015, however, the remaining debt accounted for only 25% of the Arcade's estimated value of \$52.6 million.³³ Since its renewal, the Arcade has become a significant retail outlet in Edward Street's high-end CBD precinct, and attracted several major and exclusive international retailers on long-term leases (such as Longchamp and Canturi).³⁴ Unbelievably, when Bloxsom first joined the Committee in 2001, the potential sale of the Arcade was under discussion to raise funds against the loan. 'I said it will be the biggest mistake the Club will ever make,' recalls

²⁸ TCAR 2006 and 2013.

²⁹ Cassidy, 2016.

³⁰ TCAR 2007.

³¹ TCAR 2004 and 2015.

³² TCAR 2015.

³³ Cassidy, 2016; TCAR 1999 and 2015.

³⁴ TCAR 2012.

Bloxsom, and the idea was soon discarded. That it was even considered, however, shows just how much pressure the Committee was under, and how far the Club and its prized asset have come in the short time since.³⁵

It is clear that the challenges of the post-redevelopment period forced the Club to change its economic strategy. From 1988, the primary tactic in raising funds – aside from a couple of judiciously negotiated loans – was to either increase membership fees or leverage the Club’s waiting list. While effective, such means were completely exhausted by the early 2000s and no longer presented a realistic option (although, it should be noted, there have been further rises since, with subscription currently just over \$1,000). The Club’s subsequent financial strategy – including the restructured loan agreement and a focus on debt reduction – has helped Tattersall’s to a position of financial strength. It also ensured discipline among the Committee, and a degree of protection from the banks in the wake of the GFC. The impact of the Arcade’s contribution has also been essential, especially once it became fully-tenanted and operational. This, of course, owed much to the vision of redeveloping the Arcade as a modern, first-grade facility in 1991, which ensured its long-term stability.

ii) Leadership

Alongside recent financial challenges, Tattersall’s also confronted a significant loss of leadership both among its committee and in the position of CEO. At the Annual Meeting in 2003, long-term committeemen Andrew Douglas, Fred Brown and John Foote – who was also vice president – all stood down having served a combined total of thirty-nine years.³⁶ The following year, two further committeemen departed alongside President Graeme Fry, who himself had spent sixteen years on the board. Consequently, the longest-serving office-bearer in 2004 was Bloxsom, and he had only joined the Committee in 2001.³⁷ This was a significant turnaround given that there were only three new additions to the Committee between 1990 and 1999, and these were only to fill the spaces left by vacating presidents who had served their three-year terms.³⁸ A wealth of leadership experience had therefore

³⁵ Bloxsom, 2015.

³⁶ TCAR 1988-2003.

³⁷ TCAR 2004.

³⁸ TCAR 1990-1999.

suddenly departed – having provided essential stability and guidance throughout the redevelopment process – and this only added to the difficulties facing the Club.

However, these challenging years also inspired important changes to the Committee structure. Prior to his departure in 2003, Fry wrote that improvement in the Club’s financial performance was partly due to changes in the sub-committees, which took on an active working role in lieu of a previous advisory capacity.³⁹ The Committee had, of course, always sought necessary experience, but this appeared to take on even greater emphasis at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The aforementioned Finance sub-committee, for example, was filled with expertise at a crucial time in 2004: Cassidy was a former state government treasurer who ran his own financial planning firm; Stuart Fraser owned an investment company and later became treasurer of the LNP; while Des Whybird was soon to become CEO of the major engineering company GHD (Gutteridge Haskins & Davey). These three formed a consistently able team for nearly ten years. Other sub-committees such as Marketing and Member Services were also initiated, and indicated a growing commercial focus within the Club as well as an extended contribution from Committee members. These developed alongside the more traditional sub-committee’s such as Property, which meets regularly with Finn Rasmussen (lead architect of the redevelopment). Sub-committee members also work closely with head staff at the Club – for example, the Financial Controller or the Property and Facilities Manager – who attend the monthly meetings held. While the need for specialist advice on the Committee has always been recognised, it has perhaps never been truer than in recent times given the ongoing challenges facing the Club.

A more specific recent area of focus within the Committee has concerned the Club Rules. As Tattersall’s remains unincorporated, it continues to set its own laws as opposed to being subject to Corporations Rules and Regulations, and a Rules sub-committee was established in 2015 to review appropriate changes.⁴⁰ This process was driven by Whybird, who was president at the time, and effectively modernised the Club’s constitution and by-laws.⁴¹ One notable example of change concerned electioneering when standing for the Committee, which could previously only be carried out in privacy but has since become more open. For

³⁹ TCAR 2002.

⁴⁰ TCAR 2015.

⁴¹ *Tattler*, Winter 2017.

instance, canvassing via e-mail and voting cards is now permitted providing no derogatory comments are made about individuals. While the system has consequently become more accessible and democratic, the president can still nominate candidates which has always carried influence and proven important in terms of acquiring specific skills or experience for the Committee (Geoff Rodgers, for instance, was appointed to the board in 1999 due to his background in public relations and the Club's desire to develop more of a marketing approach).⁴² Under the new rules, the president must now advertise for candidates among the wider membership and outline the specific services that are needed, as Cassidy outlines:

It's up to the president to identify the skills required in that process, which is now in the rules...Last year he advised the membership base that the Committee needed a person with commercial skills and a person with legal background...We need opinions: quick, sharp, considered responses without delay or having to ask for outside legal advice – and it saves you money too.⁴³

Other changes in the rules have strengthened the corporate governance of Tattersall's, with evaluations now also a requirement. There is an annual review of Committee performance, with an internal assessment carried out by fellow committeemen as well as the president. Furthermore, if a committeeman wants to continue beyond six years, they will need the support of a board majority in relation to their skills to continue. This should ensure greater turnover if necessary while providing more of an opportunity for the next generation to contribute. By the same token, a more frequent turnover should prevent a sudden substantial loss of committeemen as occurred in the early 2000s. The introduction of evaluations also encourages a higher level of performance. 'You'd get on there, and some would work and contribute to a huge extent,' recalls Cassidy, 'but some wouldn't – they'd just sit there.'⁴⁴ It is fair to conclude that the rule changes have crowned a heightened sense of professionalism that has emerged within the Committee this century.

The other key area of leadership within Tattersall's is the role of CEO, but it was a position that caused the Club considerable strife in the aftermath of the redevelopment. Firstly, Greg Meek joined at the beginning of 2000 following the departure of long-term CEO Paul Jones. Meek had previously been CEO at the BATC, and would later be referred to as a man 'with

⁴² Fry, 2015

⁴³ Cassidy, 2016.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

more connections than Telstra' by the *Courier-Mail*.⁴⁵ Meek had the difficult task, however, of running a club that was obviously in transition. The main objective outlined during his tenure was to maximise the usage and commercial returns of the Club and its new extensions.⁴⁶ This initiative was triggered by a loss of just under \$340,000 in 2000 as well as a 20% drop in trading profit which, in the words of President Maclean, highlighted the need for the Committee to move the Club towards a more corporate-style of operation. This focus was embodied in Meek's first contribution to *The Tattler*:

We will formulate a vision statement and identify the core values that prescribe our *modus operandi*. The operating environment will be analysed, and we will develop a customer value model. After distilling this information, we will determine our business strategy. As an output of this phase we will produce action plans to support each key area...⁴⁷

Subsequent updates adopted a similar tone, and for some members – particularly those who had been at Tattersall's for a long time – such corporate rhetoric must have been quite confronting. Meek later acknowledged that a member had approached him and suggested he 'try to encapsulate the true ethos of the Club' in his next report, as some of the members 'may not be aware of the essence of Tattersall's that is based on friendship and camaraderie'.⁴⁸ Such an example, however, really epitomises the difficulty of this period: Tattersall's was adapting to new facilities, new membership, and new leadership, while also attempting to implement a new commercial focus in response to the serious challenges facing the Club. Furthermore, the divisive issue of female membership had also come into contention. Although Meek had quite accurately communicated that it was 'incumbent on Tattersall's to embrace change,' there was also an obvious desire for the Club to not lose touch with its traditional identity and philosophy.⁴⁹

Having departed under something of a cloud in 2003, Meek's position was filled by Matt Conroy, who was promoted from his role of Financial Controller at the Club. Conroy lasted less than eighteen months, while the exact reasons for his departure were also unclear. It

⁴⁵ 'City Beat: Meek tries new door,' accessed 13 September 2016, <http://www.couriermail.com.au/business/city-beat-heraghty-signs-off/news-story/60fe60b9ef550e0d979336269d3aeb78>.

⁴⁶ *Tattler*, Autumn 2001.

⁴⁷ *Tattler*, Spring 2000.

⁴⁸ *Tattler*, Summer 2002.

⁴⁹ *Tattler*, Spring 2000.

was telling that Tattersall's had acquired and lost two different CEOs in the space of four years, in comparison to Clelland and Jones who had shared forty-two years between them. Of course, the Club was fortunate to have been so well served by two committed characters for such a long period of time; while anyone following in the footsteps of Jones, who probably oversaw more change than any of his predecessors, had tremendous shoes to fill. However, this period of unsettlement also reflected a club that was struggling with both its leadership and direction. Jones was even asked to return in an acting capacity for six months, to which he agreed, before the Club hired Michael Paramor in 2005. In Paramor – a former Army officer who had attained the rank of brigadier – it was apparent that the right man had finally been found. 'He did a lot for Tattersall's,' attests Bloxsom. 'His heart is in the Club.'⁵⁰ David Nott, the long-term Property Manager at Tattersall's, had a memorable encounter with Paramor shortly after the new CEO had begun in his role:

I received a late-night call: the sewage pumps had failed, and water was rising in the pit and had flooded into the storeroom and basement. I arrived at the Club at 3am and called the appropriate people to deal with the situation. As I turned around, there was Mr Paramor standing with a pair of wellingtons, ready for action.⁵¹

In addition to such ready commitment, the new CEO also oversaw several new initiatives that proved popular among the membership. The introduction of 'Tatts Casual' in 2006, for example, permitted the removal of tie and jacket in the Club during the hot summer months and has remained in place ever since.⁵² At the same time, Paramor was also keen to maintain strict standards and a high level of professionalism. 'There was no cash being misused and nothing being wasted within the Club,' recalls Bloxsom.⁵³ The Committee Bar, for instance, was viewed as a luxury that was being abused and was consequently shut down. 'No one was benefiting that shouldn't have been,' Bloxsom adds. 'Michael was the instigator, and he was the conscience of the Club too.'⁵⁴ Perhaps Paramor's greatest gift to Tattersall's was time, however, as he provided much-needed stability in the position for nearly seven years, parallel to a Committee that was also becoming increasingly assured with the direction of the Club. Paramor was replaced by Colonel Ross Parrot in 2011 – who

⁵⁰ Bloxsom, 2015.

⁵¹ *Tattler*, Summer 2014.

⁵² *Tattler*, Spring 2006.

⁵³ Bloxsom, 2015.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

went on to provide three years of service – though he still maintains an influence having become the Club’s first former CEO to join the Committee in 2013.⁵⁵

Tattersall’s ultimately survived a challenging period in the early 2000s that saw a significant loss of leadership while it attempted to establish a new path. There have been clear improvements in both the structure and focus of the Committee, and while there was an uncertain period following the departure of Jones as CEO in 2000, the Club has since found a degree of constancy as it continues to redefine itself in the twenty-first century.

iii) Events

In 2002, a Marketing sub-committee was formed under Vice President Geoff Rodgers in response to the ‘increasingly competitive and discerning marketplace’ that Tattersall’s operated within. It sought to provide a social and entertainment offering that would encourage members to use the Club and its facilities and services on a more regular basis.⁵⁶ Falling usage of the Club had been identified in the late 1990s and early 2000s: the 1999 Annual Report, for instance, highlighted the need for ‘our members to enjoy and use the facilities provided by our Club’ following a fall in profits. In 2000, President Maclean stressed that members’ usage had, in fact, been in decline for some time.⁵⁷ Initial marketing efforts included a revamp of the Club’s website, which showcased the Club’s offerings and provided an easier booking system, as well as improved communication and promotion via the *Tattler* magazine and electronic newsletters. Such initiatives would only be effective, however, if Tattersall’s could offer new events that actually enticed members back into the Club.⁵⁸

One such innovation saw the introduction of the Sportsman’s Grill Night in 2001, which revamped the Club’s traditional grill evenings on Tuesdays and inspired an immediate upsurge in patronage of 500%.⁵⁹ The new event was hosted by John McCoy – who joined the Committee in 2003 and later became president in 2009 – following an approach from President Fry. ‘I suppose, given my background as a sports commentator, I was the obvious choice,’ he reflects.⁶⁰ McCoy’s connections also meant that there was little cost in securing a

⁵⁵ *Tattler*, Winter 2013.

⁵⁶ *Tattler*, Winter 2002.

⁵⁷ TCAR 1999 and 2000.

⁵⁸ *Tattler*, Winter 2002.

⁵⁹ *Tattler*, Summer 2002.

⁶⁰ *Tattler*, Summer 2015.

wide range of guests and, after the first event with golf coach Charlie Earp, subsequent individuals included Wayne Bennet (rugby league), Eddie Jones (rugby union), Bart Cummings (thoroughbred racing), Ian Healy (cricket) and Kieran Perkins (swimming). McCoy made the most of an informal armchair interview format and his own personal relationship with the guest speakers. 'I knew them, and they knew me,' he recalls, 'and we had already built up a rapport enabling them to trust me, open up and say things that they might not normally say.'⁶¹ In 2003, for example, former Australian Rugby League Captain Wally Lewis talked openly about his struggles with epilepsy which were not well known at the time. 'We had a rule that what was said at the Sportsman's Grill Night stayed in-house,' adds McCoy, and this ensured a relaxed environment for guests as well as an insightful experience for members.⁶² On occasion the function has extended into politics, with former Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove both featuring in recent years, while there was also an evening with former Prime Minister John Howard in May 2012.⁶³ Ultimately, given Tattersall's long sporting association – and the plethora of sportsmen (and politicians) that have passed through its doors – the event has proven both true to the Club's roots and a modern day attraction to its current membership.

A range of other new events have appeared in the Tattersall's calendar to inspire further patronage among members and guests. These included regular corporate breakfasts – with guest speakers in 2000 including Linda Nichols (Chairperson of Australia Post) and John Dawson (CEO of the Bank of Queensland) – in addition to high teas and the Club Carvery Sunday.⁶⁴ High-quality evening attractions have included concerts from the 'Ten Tenors,' the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and, more recently, jazz nights with trumpeter James Morrison.⁶⁵ While many have become annual fixtures, others – such the Cigar Appreciation Evening, Black-Tie Poker and a hugely successful series of Titanic-themed dinners – have remained one-offs, but nonetheless added to the diversity on offer.⁶⁶ Similarly, specialist classes in the likes of ballroom dancing, self-defence and etiquette also proved popular.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *Tattler*, Autumn 2012.

⁶⁴ *Tattler*, Winter 2000.

⁶⁵ *Tattler*, Spring 1999; *Tattler*, Spring 2011; *Tattler*, Autumn 2014.

⁶⁶ *Tattler*, Spring 1999; *Tattler*, Summer 2008.

⁶⁷ *Tattler*, Spring 2009.



Fig. 58. The 'Ten Tenors at Tatts' evening, which was held in the Members' Bar in late 1999. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 1999).

From the early 2000s, there was also a very successful run of well-devised lunches to mark national celebrations and commemorations: a St Patrick's Day Luncheon in March featured an Irish piper, comedian and potato-rolling competition; in July, an American Independence Day Lunch complete with corn bread and Texan ribs proved equally successful; while a well-attended Oktoberfest dinner included a traditional German band, chicken dancing and trestle beer-hall seating. These all often attracted over 100 guests.⁶⁸ While an Australia Day Luncheon also began to take shape, it was a Waitangi Day function that proved particularly memorable. The occasion invariably included a Haka challenge with Maori representatives, Kiwi-speaking and gumboot-throwing competitions, special guests that included All Black Justin Marshall and, on one occasion, a blow-up sheep courtesy of Jonathan Cauldwell.

⁶⁸ *Tattler*, Winter 2005.

‘Originally, I wanted a real sheep in here as mascot, but getting one was going to be fairly expensive and you couldn’t have it for the whole lunch,’ explains the resident Kiwi, who was pleased to discover that the replacement sheep at least came with a battery-powered voice box. ‘If I ever wanted everyone’s attention, I’d hold that to the microphone and a loud “Baaaah!” would go out.’⁶⁹ While such distinct occasions brought people back into the Club, they also promoted a real sense of enjoyment among the members and guests.



Fig. 59. Musicians play some old US standards at the first American Independence Luncheon, held in the main function room in 2001. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 2001).

In terms of popularity and longevity, however, the most significant event introduced in recent years has been Black-Tie Boxing. Beginning in 2005 inside the Members’ Bar – where a regulation-sized boxing ring was built – the new event proved an instant success. The next year attracted more than 400 members and guests, and saw opponents vie for national selection for the 2006 Commonwealth Games.⁷⁰ The concept was inspired by a similar function held at Sydney Tattersall’s, which Cauldwell had heard about through one of its

⁶⁹ Cauldwell, 2015.

⁷⁰ *Tattler*, Spring 2005.

board members. 'I put it to the Committee that they had these things called "Fight Nights" down there,' he recalls, 'so why don't we do one here?'⁷¹ Committeemen Bloxsom, Carroll, Cassidy and Fry all travelled down to Sydney with Cauldwell to observe the function. 'It wasn't exactly how we would run it – a little loose, if you understand,' recalls Bloxsom.⁷² There was a comedian who was far from politically correct, along with trays of shots and scantily clad waitresses and ring girls. 'We got some real bare bones out of that and said "yes, this is great," but we can put our own spin on it and make it a really nice event.'⁷³

There was some division among the Committee regarding the potential backlash against promoting a 'blood sport,' especially given the recent negative press coverage concerning the female membership issue. 'It was even going to be a little bit contentious with the idea of gentlemen watching the working class beat up one another at their own pleasure,' recalls Cauldwell. 'The angle we put on it was that boxing was also a gentlemen's sport and it took place at public schools,' he explains. 'You had to come in a black-tie dinner suit to give it that level. Eventually the Committee decided to give it a go – it wasn't a happy time, but the rest is history.'⁷⁴ Indeed, Black-Tie Boxing has since become a modern-day signature event at the Club. The format is generally pre-dinner drinks and canapés, followed by three boxing contests, a break for dinner, and then the remaining three or four bouts. Past programmes have included Olympic qualifiers, Australia versus England and, for the first time in 2009, professional bouts including the national middleweight title fight.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, hundreds of members are left disappointed each year as capacity is limited to around 500. For those in attendance, however, the experience is often the highlight of the Tattersall's calendar, which in turn guarantees strong patronage and revenue for the Club on every occasion. Naturally, the event also complements the sporting tradition of Tattersall's.

⁷¹ Cauldwell, 2015.

⁷² Bloxsom, 2015.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Cauldwell, 2015.

⁷⁵ TCAR 2009.



Fig. 60. The hugely successful Black-Tie Boxing, introduced in 2005. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 2008).

Other major events at the Club still include the Art Prize, which celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2014, and the Melbourne Cup Lunch, which has become increasingly popular in recent years. Prior to the redevelopment, it was held in the Dining Room and restricted to members and male guests only. The set-up was then extended to utilise both the Healy Room and the function rooms – with female guests welcomed – before it was eventually decided to open the entire Club to the event, including the Members’ Bar, in the early 2000s. The function has attracted over 500 attendees every year since and includes drinks and dining packages, a fashion parade, TAB facilities and a live band after the races.⁷⁶ A more sombre annual occasion at Tattersall’s is the Anzac Day Lunch, which has also grown in significance this century. Since 2004, it has featured military cadets from Churchie, who form the Catafalque party, in addition to special guest speakers such as Major General Michael Slater of the Australian Army, who attended in 2009.⁷⁷ Despite its restriction to

⁷⁶ *Tattler*, Summer 2004; Cauldwell, 2015.

⁷⁷ *Tattler*, Spring 2009; *Tattler*, Winter 2014.

members and male guests only, the service has also had to be moved into the Members' Bar to accommodate the increasing numbers – in 2007, for example, nearly 200 attended.⁷⁸



Fig. 61. The Melbourne Cup Luncheon – which has now effectively become an all-day function – is one of the feature events on the Tattersall's Club calendar. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 2009).

So far this century, Tattersall's has offered a diverse programme of events for both members and guests that remains an integral component of life at the Club. New and innovative attractions such as Black-Tie Boxing and the Sportsman's Grill Night have rejuvenated the Club's calendar, alongside established occasions such as the Art Prize and the Father-Son and Father-Daughter dinners. Though some of the older traditions have sadly retreated – there are, for instance, only a handful of dinner-dances currently held each year around Christmas and New Year – events such as the Calcutta evenings and the Senior Members' Luncheon remain popular and, in different ways, relate back to the Club's past. While the likes of Black-Tie Boxing and the Anzac Lunch still reflect the male-only tradition

⁷⁸ *Tattler*, Winter 2007.

of Tattersall's, meanwhile, events such as the Melbourne Cup Lunch and the various evening concerts are more inclusive and, importantly, showcase the Club to a wider audience.

iv) Dining

While events have been important in attracting members and guests back into the Club, they have largely succeeded on an intermittent basis only. Day-to-day usage has remained a challenge, and regular dining – particularly the luncheon tradition – has fallen considerably this century despite the initial promise following the completion of the redevelopment. The Healy Room, which opened for trading on 30 April 1997, served nearly 25,500 meals before the end of the year – made up of 14,000 lunches and 11,500 dinners – which contributed to a total of 90,000 throughout the Club.⁷⁹ This was an increase of over 50% on the meals served in 1996 and the most since 60,700 were recorded in 1969.⁸⁰ This was surpassed in 1999 when 105,000 meals were served: the Healy Room contributed 30,000 while functions, the Dining Room, and the newly-opened Bistro (by the Health Centre) made up the rest.⁸¹

The Healy Room certainly offered a new dining experience. It was of course mixed company, and members' wives or partners and their guests could access the facility independently. Everything in the Healy Room was new from the bone china lined with twenty-two carat gold to the Italian sambonet silverware, while the staff also wore new specialised uniforms. 'It just went to another level,' recalls Cauldwell. 'Paul Jones, and obviously the Committee, wanted the Healy Room to be the talk of the town.'⁸² In addition to lunch and dinner, the Healy Room served breakfast, brunch and high tea, while its pastry section and cocktail bar were also popular amenities. Other features included daily fresh flowers, candle sticks, grand piano playing, a port and liquor trolley, a dessert trolley and – from March 1999 – a gueridon trolley that offered flambé tableside cooking. 'It was theatrical dining,' recalls Virginia Jenson, who became Restaurant Manager of the Healy Room upon its opening. 'The gueridon trolley was great fun – flamboyant and memorable. It was like going back to the 1940s, and no one else was doing it.'⁸³

⁷⁹ TCAR 1997.

⁸⁰ TCAR 1969 and 1996.

⁸¹ TCAR 1999.

⁸² Cauldwell, 2015.

⁸³ Jenson, 2015.



Fig. 62. Virginia Jenson, the first manager of the Healy Room, serves up a light lunch. The portrait of Bill Healy, Tattersall's longest-serving president (twenty-one years), hangs in the background above a dining group enjoying the Club's new restaurant. (Photo: Rene Marcel, 2001).

Despite such promise, catering at the Club was affected by the declining usage trends identified at the beginning of the century. In 2001, Tattersall's served around 76,000 meals – an 18.5% decrease on the previous year – and catering revenue fell by \$124,000. This shortfall was somewhat negated by a reduction in expenses of \$95,000, but the decline in both patronage and spending was symbolic of the difficulties facing the Club.⁸⁴ Meals served in the Healy Room fell by almost 50% and, given the high operating costs of running a full service seven-days-a-week, luxury items such as the gueridon trolley were stripped back. The reduction in dining patronage at the Club – which was also seen in the Members' Dining Room as well as the wildly unpopular Bistro, which closed in 2001 – corresponded with a fall in membership from a total of 7,350 in 1998 to 6,200 in 2002.⁸⁵ It is also likely, however,

⁸⁴ TCAR 2001.

⁸⁵ TCAR 1998 and 2002. Meals served in the Healy Room fell from 30,000 in 1999 to 17,000 in 2002.

that the initial excitement of the new facility wore off for some, while Tattersall's has also faced competition from a growing number and variety of food services within the city.

The challenge of daily usage, highlighted in Tattersall's Annual Report for 2007, was only exacerbated by the GFC.⁸⁶ While the Members' Dining Room served nearly 18,000 meals in 2006, the number had fallen by 5,000 within four years.⁸⁷ In 2012, there was still a general decline in the retail and hospitality sectors throughout Queensland, and less than 70,000 meals were served across the Club – the lowest figure since before the redevelopment. Overall patronage also declined by 7% year-on-year – a shortfall of nearly 4,000 guests – and naturally the Club's trading profit suffered.⁸⁸ From 2000 to 2004 over \$1 million had been produced every year, but between 2006 and 2009 figures of \$851,000, \$712,000, \$456,000 and \$285,000 were recorded. A downward trend in usage was of course evident before the GFC, and accentuated further by a membership base that had fallen to 5,150 by 2012.⁸⁹ It is clear, however, that the challenging economic climate worsened the Club's problems.

With fewer meals served in the Dining Room, the luncheon inevitably became less of a defining feature of the modern-day Tattersall's Club. Amid the negative patterns and growing competition, however, it should not be forgotten that the Club had anticipated an existence less characterised by its dining tradition with the redevelopment. As Templeton stated upon the completion of the new extensions: 'We all have to get used to the fact that our Club is no longer a Monday to Friday luncheon Club, but a seven-day-a-week facility with wonderful amenities for all.'⁹⁰ Even the opening of the Healy Room – while a successful and necessary enterprise – had diluted the traditional lunch experience in the sense that it took numbers away from the Dining Room. It is difficult, however, to mount any serious criticism of such a vital transformative period for Tattersall's. 'It was a wonderful dinosaur – but a dinosaur,' reflects Jenson. 'It had to change and grow to survive.'⁹¹ Even if the Club had survived without undertaking such change, it is hard to imagine the luncheon becoming

⁸⁶ TCAR 2007.

⁸⁷ TCAR 2006 and 2010.

⁸⁸ TCAR 2012.

⁸⁹ TCAR 2000-2012.

⁹⁰ *Tattler*, Winter 1997.

⁹¹ Jenson, 2016.

any less affected this century. Furthermore, in terms of its general atmosphere, Cauldwell points to societal change as much as anything in diminishing its impact:

People have become...society has become sterile. It's all politically correct. And I suppose now there's phones where people can have their photos taken or videos taken, and that can be sent viral around the world. Before there wasn't that so people could get away with it. No one sings or does the war cries or any of that stuff anymore. And that's the Club I was fortunate enough to see – that innocent, boyish fun.⁹²

While it is often human nature to revere days gone by, there was a real sense that Tattersall's was the place to be for lunch in the city for much of the twentieth-century. Nonetheless, lunches were still served across the two dining rooms every working day throughout 2015, and it continues to be an important part of the week for many members, partners and guests. When the Members' Dining Room is approaching full capacity – Friday is still its busiest day – the sight and sound remains impressive. Certainly, for Head Chef Dave Oke, who joined the catering staff in 2002, the tradition is a worthy upkeep. 'It's like no other place this place,' he said in 2014. 'I've worked in other hotels and restaurants, but Tatts is unique – it's like a family. When you work here you take pride in the Club, you fight for this place and you make it work because we're bigger and better than the others.'⁹³ This sense of family belonging – and genuine pride – is symbolic of the bonds formed throughout the Club's history. Former Food and Services Manager Mark Showell reflected upon this enduring ethos when he departed Tattersall's after nearly fourteen years in 2015:

It is the unique synergy the Club has. There is the high end, prim and proper Tattersall's Club everyone sees from the outside, but also the camaraderie between not just the members but the staff as well. You can see it, in particular, in the dining rooms, where even though the service is still kept to a certain level there are a lot of friendships that are developed over the years.⁹⁴

One occasion that particularly resonated with Showell was the final luncheon held by member Arthur Byrne, who had recently been diagnosed with a terminal illness: 'It was his thank you to all of his family and friends.' Byrne requested that both Showell and Shawn Stanley (current Dining Room Supervisor) were on-hand as headwaiters. 'In the end we gave up serving and were just there for his lunch,' recalled Showell. 'It was a really powerful

⁹² Cauldwell, 2015.

⁹³ *Tattler*, Spring 2014.

⁹⁴ *Tattler*, Spring 2015.

experience.⁹⁵ While facts and figures may suggest a more negative pattern in regards to the luncheon overall, they do not reflect occasions such as these that continue to place dining – and, more importantly, friendship – at the heart of Tattersall’s Club.

v) Functions

While at odds with a traditionally private and exclusive nature, many clubs have had to adjust their models to incorporate external functions. The Brisbane Club, for example, now includes seven function rooms, and in 2015 its president duly noted that weddings and corporate functions had helped to ‘insulate against the peaks and troughs of trading.’⁹⁶ Considering the challenging trends so far this century, the continued success of Tattersall’s functions department has proven similarly welcome. In 2000, the Club’s new Sales and Marketing Manager Trudy Flemming articulated a more commercial outlook when she remarked that ‘everywhere there’s a room, I’ll sell it.’ While Flemming acknowledged that the Club was now a ‘very competitive business,’ she also highlighted that ‘in catering to paying customers, Tattersall’s can bankroll the facilities so integral to club life.’⁹⁷ The new function rooms could seat up to 350 banquet-style or divide into three separate spaces, and therefore catered for a range of functions of varying sizes including dinners, balls, seminars and annual general meetings. Weddings also saw an immediate increase following the redevelopment, with sixty held in 1997 compared to forty-one the previous year, and the Club has since become an iconic wedding venue in Brisbane (2014 marked twenty-five years of weddings at Tattersall’s, with over 1,000 having taken place in that time).⁹⁸

From 2013, functions began to operate under the Tattersall’s Function Centre banner. The new branding provided the department with its own separate identity within the Club, as there was previously a confused message as to who could book functions. The new department consisted of three event coordinators, a wedding coordinator and a functions centre manager, in addition to a growing body of specially-trained functions staff. ‘When I joined the Club in 2008, a lot of events were associated with members, their business and

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ ‘Elite clubs for the city’s movers and shakers are thriving,’ *Courier-Mail*, accessed 7 January 2017, <http://www.couriermail.com.au/business/elite-clubs-for-the-citys-movers-and-shakers-are-thriving/news-story/20b65a51890efa63baf97935f54e1334>.

⁹⁷ *On the Move*, 4 November 2000.

⁹⁸ TCAR 1996 and 1997; *Tattler*, Winter 2014.

associates,' recalled Functions Centre Manager Rhea Kopsala in 2014. 'In recent times, we now work with corporate identities directly and promote the Tatts name that way.'⁹⁹ There are approximately 600 functions held each year – with 42,000 covers – and anyone can book a corporate or private event to be held at the Club, although members do receive benefits for bookings which include loyalty points and a 50% discount on venue hire.¹⁰⁰ The majority of functions held at Tattersall's are not Club events, however, and while this might be confronting to some members – who may, for instance, take exception to part of the Members' Bar being occupied separately – functions have at least ensured regular activity within the Club at a time when it has otherwise suffered from falling patronage. On occasion, they have inspired some particularly lively scenes. For example, following a lunch for 300 in the function rooms in the mid-Noughties – held by the 'Sporting Hasbeens' charity – the party arranged to move down to the Members' Bar. With a deluge of members also present, sheer chaos ensued when someone brought out a rugby ball, as Cauldwell recalls:

It was just like a big watering hole: punkah fans going, 600-odd guys and girls in there...We all know what rum and coke does with the sugar – it just fires people up. And, of course this game of rugby started. There were line-outs, rolling-mauls...And the scrum went down, the ball went out – thrown down the bar and kicked – and I happened to see all of this. So, I ran through, jumped up and grabbed it, and kept going through into the Members' Dining Room and just took off with it, because this game was just going to get out of hand. Of course, I was booed like crazy.¹⁰¹

The overall growth and importance of functions, meanwhile, can be seen in their rising share of the meals served at Tattersall's. In 1999, they accounted for 32,600 of the 105,000 meals provided in the Club, which was just over 31%.¹⁰² By 2010, this proportion had increased to over 60%, with nearly 45,600 meals sold through functions in comparison to the 30,000 delivered across the two dining rooms.¹⁰³ Functions have therefore been crucial in maintaining positive trade, with the 2008 Annual Report highlighting how they had helped to offset the challenging losses within the food and beverage departments.¹⁰⁴ The GFC, unsurprisingly, resulted in a downturn in bookings that the department was still recovering from in 2015. There are also more city venues offering events than ever before,

⁹⁹ *Tattler*, Summer 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Matthew Carter (Head of Operations, Tattersall's Club), e-mail to the author, 17 July 2017.

¹⁰¹ Cauldwell, 2015.

¹⁰² TCAR 2009.

¹⁰³ TCAR 2010.

¹⁰⁴ TCAR 2008.

so it remains an increasingly competitive market. Nonetheless, functions continue to largely underpin the food and beverage offering at Tattersall's – it is extremely unlikely that the subsidised bar and dining services for members could be sustained without their strong performance.¹⁰⁵ Given the fall in membership usage, and declining traditions such as the daily luncheon and the once-weekly Dinner Dance, the ability of functions to attract regular custom has been a clear success and well-managed adaption of the modern Club.

The functions department naturally illustrates the growing corporate operation of Tattersall's and, alongside the fact that the Club has expanded more generally, it is unsurprising that the proportion of casual staff has increased among a total of around 120 (which, incidentally, compares with less than twenty staff members 100 years ago and around sixty in 1989). While the staff continue to credit the Club, there is obviously a need to restrict any dilution of the familial sense of belonging that has defined Tattersall's for so long. One former long-term staff member, Monica Phillips, is well placed to comment having retired in 2015 after thirty years at Tattersall's. Phillips served as librarian and later held several membership services responsibilities, in addition to assisting with the new *Tattler* from 1993 (alongside editor Tony Walsh). 'Most of the senior staff have really put their heart and soul into the members and into the Club itself,' she reflects. 'And it's hard for them too, I think, to see a change in focus...It wasn't just treated like a workplace, but as an extension of their own family.'¹⁰⁶ Close relationships undoubtedly remain but, in previous eras, the turnover between staff and membership was less frequent, while the higher levels of usage ensured regular, often daily, contact. In addition, there are now usually as many non-members inside Tattersall's as there are members, with a busy lunch perhaps more likely to be part of an external function than a members' gathering. While such a change has been necessary towards the Club's survival, the challenge facing Tattersall's is to maintain a balance with the continuity that is so important within a members' club. Ultimately, there is a need to sustain a high level of interaction among staff, members and guests, so as not to detract from an environment that remains a home away from home for so many.

¹⁰⁵ *Tattler*, Summer 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Monica Phillips, conducted by the author, 28 October 2015.

vi) Subsidiary clubs

The subsidiary clubs at Tattersall's have always engaged and fostered relations between members, and the first sub-clubs (bowls, cricket and golf) all remain active into the twenty-first century. With the addition of the Racqueteers in 1970 and the Snooker Club in 1988 – following the Club's long-association with snooker and billiards – there was also a diversification away from sport with the establishment of the Wine Club in 1991. Their success, alongside the longevity of the original three, has provided a reliable platform for the recent surfeit of new sub-clubs within Tattersall's. President Maclean duly noted in early 2002 that there was 'potential for more sporting and activity-based clubs to provide additional services to our members,' and seven have successfully formed since – namely the Rowing, Shooters, Motorcycle, Walkers, Classic Film, Colts, and Heritage sub-clubs.¹⁰⁷



Fig. 63. The original three sub-clubs remain active. Here, the bowlers and golfers enjoy days out in 2014. (Photo: tattersallsclub.com.au/the-club/interest-groups).

¹⁰⁷ TCAR 2001

In early 2003, President Fry wrote that the Club was planning to extend its range of available events and activities, and aimed 'to enhance the value of membership and to emphasise the friendly, healthy and enjoyable activities to members.'¹⁰⁸ When Peter Carroll succeeded Fry in 2004, he spoke of the changes in attitudes to fitness that he had seen among members, and that year the Club added new activities which included cycling, fishing, rowing, running, swimming and even surfing.¹⁰⁹ The intention behind this drive, and the subsequent flurry of new sub-clubs, was to increase usage of the Club and adapt to members' changing needs. It was also an attempt to address the falling and ageing membership trends. In adding further value, Tattersall's hoped to not only retain members but attract a newer and younger demographic. 'One thing recognised was that many men needed to physically do a common activity with other members of the Club,' explains Sparksman. 'We needed an activity-based club for those who would not come in simply for a conversation or to dine at the Club.'¹¹⁰

The Rowing Club paved the way for a new generation of sub-clubs when it formed in 2004. It originated when Sparksman and fellow member Scott Nelson began rowing together in the early 2000s. 'But I realised you need a crew, so I thought why not invite some of the other Tatts members and we'll call it "Tatts Rowers,"' recalls Sparksman.¹¹¹ The sub-club quickly attracted sixty members and negotiated to row at the UQ boat sheds. Although encouragement and assistance from the main Club was significant, the specific interest for each new sub-club developed among the members themselves – just as it had with the original sub-clubs. 'It's amazing: unless you ask the question, you never know,' notes Ed Profke, long-term member and president of the Tattersall's Motorcycle Club (TMC). 'So, we decided to ask, "Who enjoys riding motorcycles?" – and suddenly quite a few people put their hands up.'¹¹² The TMC duly formed in 2006 under first president Casey Stringfellow. The Shooters Club began in similar circumstances in 2012 through brothers Connor and Liam O'Brien. 'Connor and I would be having a beer at lunch or something and just talking to people, and inevitably they would ask what we did at the weekend,' recalls (Liam) O'Brien. 'And we'd say we went on a shoot – and increasingly, people wanted to come with us, to

¹⁰⁸ TCAR 2002.

¹⁰⁹ *Tattler*, Winter 2004; *Tattler*, Spring 2004.

¹¹⁰ Sparksman, 2015.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Interview with Ed Profke, conducted by the author, 22 January 2016.

the extent that we were taking groups of people from Tatts.¹¹³ When O'Brien put out an expression of interest, more than 100 members responded within twenty-four hours.



Fig. 64. (top) The TMC forms as a sub-club in 2006; the Shooter's Club (left) and Rowing Club (right) enjoy competing in recent years. (Photo: tattersallsclub.com.au/the-club/interest-groups).

With the addition of the Walkers, which became a sub-club in 2009, these groups represent an ambition from the membership to make the most of their Club both actively and socially. This in itself can result in the discovery of further common interests between members, best exemplified when the idea for the Classic Film Club developed at a dinner following one of

¹¹³ Interview with Liam O'Brien, conducted by the author, 15 January 2015.

the Walkers' excursions. 'A shared interest among some in classic film became apparent,' recalls President Michael Halliday, and another sub-club subsequently formed in 2011.¹¹⁴ Halliday also became president of the recently established Heritage Club in 2015. A heritage group had formed in late 2004 under members Glen Lampard, Arthur Byrne and Terry Tollhurst, and successfully recommended that Tattersall's revert to the crest featuring the two horses' heads (as opposed to the original TC emblem that had been reintroduced and promoted as the Club's principal logo in 2001).¹¹⁵ The current Heritage Club initiated as a volunteers group in 2014, and its work has since included identifying and cataloguing heritage assets as well as interviewing elder members and long-term staff – both of which carry immense importance in recording and preserving the history of Tattersall's. It has also organised several guest-speaker lunches that have proven popular for members and guests.



Fig. 65. (left) The TC symbol – here incorporated into the Heritage sub-club's logo – is the original Tattersall's emblem; (right) the horses' heads image was in use from at least the 1930s, but was combined with the Club's motto in 1962 to create a new Tattersall's crest.

Owing to the Club's need to both attract and sustain its appeal for younger members – as part of its strategic planning – a Young Members' Advisory Group was established in early 2003. Initiated by Committeeman Stuart Fraser, the aptly-named Colts Club followed in July 2004 to help the younger and newer members to settle and take advantage of the Club.¹¹⁶ More activities were made available and included snooker competitions, golf lessons, touch

¹¹⁴ *Tattler*, Spring 2011.

¹¹⁵ *Tattler*, Summer 2005.

¹¹⁶ *Tattler*, Winter 2004.

football, cricket-barbeques and post-work drinks on Fridays, while the Colts also began reserving tables for major events at the Club.¹¹⁷ Although the sub-club disintegrated shortly after, it was successfully revived in February 2014 – a year in which the new junior membership category was also introduced at Tattersall’s.¹¹⁸ The new Colts, led by President Michael Zivcic, re-established many of the original features while adding several new initiatives. These included regular breakfasts with guest speakers – from CEOs to MPs – and a clay pigeon shooting day arranged in conjunction with the Shooters Club.¹¹⁹ ‘It is an ongoing challenge for Tattersall’s to remain relevant to younger members,’ says Zivcic. ‘The most effective way that they can do that is to empower them, as they have done with the Colts, and allow them to run events which appeal to the younger demographic.’¹²⁰ By 2015, the Colts boasted 120 active members, while in the same year the sub-club also held its inaugural black-tie ball and raised over \$15,000 for Legacy Australia in the process.¹²¹



Fig. 66. The revived Colts sub-club enjoy a recent Snooker Tournament at Tattersall’s. (Photo: tattersallsclub.com.au/the-club/interest-groups).

¹¹⁷ *Tattler*, Winter 2005.

¹¹⁸ *Tattler*, Spring 2014.

¹¹⁹ *Tattler*, Summer 2014.

¹²⁰ *Tattler*, Spring 2015.

¹²¹ TCAR 2015.

The new sub-clubs have all made significant strides since their respective formations and established busy annual calendars. The Rowing Club meet regularly each week, and in 2015 it consisted of around thirty members. It is registered with Rowing Queensland and competes in regattas both locally and overseas, promoting the Tattersall's name at the Masters Rowing Championships in Australia and the World Masters in the US and Europe.¹²² The TMC, which included over fifty members in 2015, ride every month. The highlight of the year is the annual overnight trip to Tenterfield. 'The rule is everyone has to bring a nice top-shelf bottle of red,' says Proke. 'We'll go to a nice restaurant, and it's a celebration of friendship and life and a great escape.'¹²³ The Shooters Club similarly arrange a monthly shoot while tackling multi-disciplines throughout the year. With over 150 members, it caters for both beginners and well-seasoned shooters. Like all sub-clubs, there is a strong social element at its events, which culminate in a competitive shoot at the end of each year.¹²⁴

The attraction of the sub-clubs is obvious when speaking to those involved. Greg Clarke, President of the Rowing Club in 2015, was a relative latecomer to the activity. 'To actually get into a new sport or skill later in life is fantastic,' he says. 'It rejuvenates your interest, it improves your fitness, and more than anything it expands your contacts and friends in life beyond what you originally had.'¹²⁵ For many members of Tattersall's – and it is worth remembering that the average age is around fifty – the sub-clubs also offer a new lease of life. 'We have a mission, we have a purpose, we get out of bed at five o'clock in the morning,' adds Clarke. 'We're at the shed and every person has a smile on their face.' In addition to the healthy and rewarding lifestyle, there have been some notable occasions that highlight just how much progress the sub-clubs have made. In 2015, for instance, a fully-coloured and badged Tattersall's crew took part in the world's largest two-day rowing event – the Head of the Charles Regatta. 'We were in Boston, rowing on the Charles River with most of North America's best rowers,' reflects Clarke.¹²⁶

There have been other, further-reaching benefits to the sub-clubs. The rowers welcome members who do not belong to Tattersall's – including females – which has encouraged

¹²² Interview with Greg Clarke, conducted by the author, 15 January 2016.

¹²³ Profke, 2016.

¹²⁴ O'Brien, 2016

¹²⁵ Clarke, 2016.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

engagement with the wider community. Shooting has also demonstrated a broad appeal, with entire families known to make a day of the events. ‘There have been a couple of instances where members have said they haven’t been able to share in an experience like that with their son or daughter for months or years,’ says O’Brien.¹²⁷ The second wave of sub-clubs have also invoked interest in the Club beyond its existing members. The TMC, for instance, has a healthy guest and affiliates list that introduces people to the Club. ‘It has grown many times into them becoming members at Tattersall’s,’ confirms Profke, who recalls one ride to Rosevale in 2014 convincing three guests to apply for membership the following week.¹²⁸ All sub-clubs, meanwhile, have tried to use the main Club as much as possible. While this naturally suits the likes of the Heritage and Wine clubs – the latter held fifteen events at Tattersall’s in 2015 – it also extends to the sporting clubs and the Colts, who all reserve tables at events and use the Club for meetings, monthly lunches and annual dinners. The sub-clubs’ relationship with Tattersall’s, meanwhile, is one of transparency. Each receive an annual grant from the Club and maintain communication with the wider membership with regular updates in the quarterly *Tattler* magazine.



Fig. 67. Members of the Shooting Club and their families enjoy a day out in 2015. (Photo: tattersallsclub.com.au/the-club/interest-groups).

¹²⁷ O’Brien, 2016.

¹²⁸ Profke, 2016.

It is notable that the key individuals involved in running the sub-clubs hold long associations with Tattersall's. Michael Needham, President of the Snooker sub-club in 2015, is the son of former Tattersall's President Dr Bob Needham, while Adrian Symons' father was a member in the 1950s. This trend has continued among the second-wave of sub-clubs: O'Brien was among the third generation of his family to become Tattersall's members; Profke's father joined the Club in 1955; while Clarke himself has been a member for over thirty years. Such individuals possess an innate understanding of what Tattersall's really is, and this naturally trickles down. 'I think much like the main Club, the thing that has made it successful is the sense of tradition and camaraderie,' reflects O'Brien.¹²⁹ Profke shares a similar view: 'I very much say that the heart of the Motorcycle Club is the extension of friendship is life.'¹³⁰ Upon his appointment as Tattersall's CEO in 2005, the strength of the sub-clubs was immediately obvious to Michael Paramor, who sensed that they were the lifeblood of the Club itself. 'That's where you get the common interest and friendship developing,' he said. 'To me, the sub-clubs are the enactment of the Club's motto.'¹³¹ Ultimately, the most outstanding feature of the sub-clubs is their ability to consistently draw members closer together over a shared passion or a new challenge. 'The friendships found and nurtured within them are the essence of the value of Tattersall's Club membership,' concludes O'Brien.¹³²

The subsidiary clubs have all played a crucial role in the success of Tattersall's so far this century. They have helped the Club to engage with its members and further diversified its activities – and in doing so, Tattersall's has remained relevant. 'Colts have been successful in engaging with a number of members,' reflects Zivcic, 'who otherwise were not particularly active within the Club.'¹³³ More broadly, the sub-clubs' resurgence represents a wider shift in the identity of Tattersall's, as Jonathan Bloxsom – who belongs to the TMC – explains:

Our culture has changed here from a drinking culture...I've got a young family and I want to be at home with them straight after work or as soon as possible, whereas in the old days or generations ago – probably not that long ago – the bar would be six deep a few nights a week. People would come into the Club for a few drinks, and that's completely changed. People still need something to bind them together, and it's not so much the bar – it's their interests.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ O'Brien, 2016.

¹³⁰ Profke, 2016.

¹³¹ *Tattler*, Winter 2005.

¹³² *Tattler*, Spring 2010.

¹³³ *Tattler*, Spring 2015.

¹³⁴ Bloxsom, 2016.

The focused development of the subsidiary clubs provided members with a new focal point at their Club. 'And that gave them a reason to have a chat and be part of the life at the Club,' argues Sparksman. 'They could participate in and talk about rowing, motorcycling, tennis or any of the many activities.'¹³⁵ Adrian Symons, who as a member of both the main Club and the Racqueteers since the 1970s, is also well-placed to summarise the evolution:

They were probably regarded as a little bit of an aberration when I first joined. Certainly, in the last five-ten years, there has been a massive shift of emphasis from the leadership here on the importance of the sub-clubs. I think that probably coincided with the building extensions where there was a big drive for membership – they realised they had to offer something more than a Dining Room to attract people to the Club. I think it's those other ancillary activities that probably are the motivating factor for a lot of younger members to join, because it may appeal to them as giving them added value.¹³⁶

Ultimately, the sub-clubs remain an important component of membership that has helped to shape the modern-day Tattersall's Club, with approximately one in five members belonging to at least one sub-club in 2015. They have benefited from both the concerted encouragement and support of the Tattersall's leadership, along with the enthusiasm and willingness demonstrated by members, and have recorded some success in responding to the challenging trends of declining membership and usage within the Club.

vii) Racing

While Tattersall's celebrated 150 years of racing in Queensland in 2015 – on the basis that the first Tattersall's Cup was run in 1865 – its future within the thoroughbred industry remains uncertain. This is largely due to the various difficulties that have emerged within an industry that has experienced declining attendances for some time. For the TRC, 55,000 attended its four meetings every year in the 1960s, yet this number had fallen to 25,000 by the end of the 1980s. Elsewhere, in the US over 78 million spectators were attracted to all forms of horseracing in 1975, but by 1997 this figure had almost halved to 42 million.¹³⁷ More recently, the Caulfield Cup in Melbourne attracted 30,000 spectators in 2015, but that

¹³⁵ Sparksman, 2015.

¹³⁶ Symons, 2016.

¹³⁷ 'No, horseracing can't be saved – even by a Triple Crown Winner,' *The Atlantic*, accessed 7 March 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/05/no-horse-racing-cant-be-saved-even-by-a-triple-crown-winner/371255/>.

was 22,000 less than the crowd that attended ten years previously.¹³⁸ Certainly, recent advances in technology have enabled increased viewing of sports at home and further facilitated off-course gambling on a multitude of events at any time across the world. As *The Atlantic* summarises, 'With the advent of more and more gambling opportunities in recent decades, (racing) has suffered through a long-term decline as a spectator sport.'¹³⁹ Race clubs have tried to make meetings more attractive to attendees, yet the *Herald Sun* laments that crowds have continued to fall despite clubs paying for rock bands, upgrading menus, renovating bars, and providing portable mobile phone chargers and free wi-fi. The sport itself is also partly to blame, with many big meetings preferring 'an exhausting, relentless, expensive marathon of early starts, ten race-cards and late finishes.'¹⁴⁰

Aside from declining attendance trends, it should also be noted that Tattersall's has been operating within an industry that has undergone significant recent change in Queensland. At the beginning of the century, the central body for racing in the state was the Queensland Principal Club (QPC), a structure made up of eleven members that included representatives from the two primary metropolitan racing clubs: the QTC and the Brisbane Turf Club (BTC – formerly BATC). The QPC introduced the Centralised Prizemoney Payment System in 2000, which saw the body consolidate control over the allocation and distribution of prizemoney.¹⁴¹ Racing clubs throughout the state – including the TRC, QTC and BTC – no longer carried this responsibility or received their own race nominations. One year later, however, the QPC structure was abolished in the wake of the *Racing and Betting Amendment Act*.¹⁴² An interim body was established instead and, in 2006, this evolved into Queensland Racing (although, to confuse matters further, it has since been rebranded Racing Queensland). The new body took full administration of the Queensland thoroughbred industry, with its chairman appointed by the state's racing minister.

Another important change relates to the QTC itself, which successfully merged with the BTC to form the Brisbane Racing Club (BRC) in 2009, with both Eagle Farm and Doomben falling

¹³⁸ 'Blinkers off: Spring carnival crowds on the decline in worrying trend,' *Herald Sun*, accessed 23 February 2017, <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/sport/superracing/vic-racing/blinkers-off-spring-carnival-crowds-on-the-decline-in-worrying-trend/news-story/e762cb9e7f10a1cee565a8e60209a0d1>.

¹³⁹ 'No, horseracing can't be saved.'

¹⁴⁰ 'Blinkers off.'

¹⁴¹ TRCAR 2000/01.

¹⁴² Coughlan, *QTC*, 179-80.

under the new entity's ownership. That these two long-term rivals amalgamated at all – figures in both institutions used to refer to Nudgee Road, which ran between the two clubs, as the 'Gaza strip' – was indicative of the difficulties confronting Queensland racing.

Following a loss in excess of \$1 million in 2008, BTC Chairman Wayne Milner wrote:

BTC now operates in an environment where the competition for the entertainment dollar is intense – especially in a region like south-east Queensland, where corporates and the public have a wide choice of sporting venues to attend. No longer can race clubs rely on wagering distributions and large crowds attending race days as they once did.¹⁴³

In addition, Queensland Racing made it clear in late 2007 that it would not support a future for Brisbane metropolitan racing that contemplated both the QTC and the BTC existing as separate entities. This would have included the withdrawal of a \$950,000 administration subsidy that was paid to both institutions by the new central body.¹⁴⁴

Amid an industry that has endured recent challenges and considerable change, Tattersall's has still experienced some positives within racing this century. Most notably, the Winter Stakes was elevated to a Group One race in 2007 when it boasted a stake of \$500,000 for the first time. The following year, Bob Frappell – President of the Thoroughbred Breeders of Queensland Association – reflected upon the importance of the Winter Stakes to the Australian racing calendar. 'When a filly or mare wins or is placed, her stud value rises significantly and so does the value of all her family,' he said. 'It's a real win-win for Queensland racing and breeding.'¹⁴⁵ Well-known racing journalist Bart Sinclair added that the race is all about position and timing. 'Tatts sensed a window was ajar for the introduction of a race for fillies and mares, strategically placed in June just prior to the Spring breeding season,' he explained.¹⁴⁶ Under President John McCoy, the race name was changed to the Tattersall's Tiara in 2011. McCoy felt that the Winter Stakes 'was quite a generic name,' while the tiara branding also carried a clear female connotation and was more marketable – especially considering the substantial sponsorship and broadcasting rights that were agreed with Sky Racing at the time.¹⁴⁷ Following its Group One promotion and rechristening, the overall quality of the Tiara's race field has lifted considerably. In

¹⁴³ BTC and QTC Amalgamation Proposal 2008 (document).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ *Tattler*, Winter 2008.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with John McCoy, conducted by the author, 14 April 2015; TRCAR 2011/12.

addition, it is the centrepiece of a strong programme that also features the Tattersall's Cup, which is now a Group Three race and a qualifier for the Caulfield Cup.¹⁴⁸

Tattersall's has also maintained its four race meetings per year despite the declining trend in attendances. The total attendance of 16,700 across its four meetings in the 2002/03 season was a marked reduction from the 1990s' average of just under 27,500 spectators per year.¹⁴⁹ In the 1990s, however, the TRC had demonstrated an ability to go against the trend, and the Club rallied again between 2008 and 2011 when race season attendances averaged around 20,000 (the total of 20,401 across the 2010/11 season was the highest in a decade). Such a resurgence was, of course, partly due to the upgraded June meeting. It was also, unfortunately, rather temporary, as the decline quickly resumed with the Club recording its lowest ever aggregate attendance (13,275) over a four-meeting race season in 2012/13.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the TRC's meetings remained some of the best attended race days on the Brisbane metropolitan calendar. Even its average of 3,320 per meeting in the 2012/13 season, for instance, easily surpassed the BRC's average attendance of 2,143 that year.¹⁵¹

There has, however, also been a negative trend within the TRC's membership. It boasted over 3,300 members in 1998, but this figure fell annually thereafter and there were less than 2,000 members by the end of the 2010/11 racing season.¹⁵² While this partly demonstrated a falling interest in thoroughbred racing among Tattersall's membership, it is worth recalling that the main Club also experienced a decline in membership during the same period. Nonetheless, the trend was a concern, particularly after the TRC recorded a loss in the 2011/12 racing season for the first time since 1980. The Committee decided that, from 1 July 2012, all members of Tattersall's Club would automatically belong to the racing club as well. Tattersall's would pay the TRC a substantially higher fee for each member that would reflect a value comparable to BRC membership, and in 2015 this sponsorship was worth \$90,000. The scheme would also arrest the slide in TRC numbers – albeit somewhat

¹⁴⁸ TRCAR 2014/15.

¹⁴⁹ TRCAR 2002/03.

¹⁵⁰ TRCAR 2008/09 - 2012/13

¹⁵¹ Brisbane Racing Club Annual Report 2012/13.

¹⁵² TRCAR 1997/98 and 2010/11.

artificially – with the instant addition of over 2,500 new members. Naturally, the Committee also hoped to see a sizable increase in attendances, although this has yet to be realised.¹⁵³

In addition to the sponsorship, the racing club benefit from the repayment of the \$1 million loan that it provided to the main Club following the redevelopment. In recent years, this has ensured an annual receipt of \$50,000, and in 2015 there was still \$680,000 outstanding.

There is also an interest on the loan of 9.75% per annum, which was worth \$76,000 in 2015.

While these are of course payments that the TRC is entitled to, they remain a vital source of yearly funds. In addition, Tattersall's has substantially subsidised the administration fee it charges the TRC. In 2015, just over \$20,000 was invoiced, whereas in previous years the amount was often over \$100,000. Given that the TRC made a profit of under \$25,000 in the 2014/15 racing season, its reliance upon additional support from the main Club is clear.¹⁵⁴

At present, the TRC's income is insufficient to cover its expenses without the help of Tattersall's, and its cash reserves of approximately \$1.5 million will deplete quickly if the sponsorship is not increased or at least maintained. Central to the difficulties facing the TRC is the significant outlay required to secure the use of Eagle Farm. 'I believe we are the only race club in Australia – certainly Queensland – that does not own a racecourse,' reflects Michael Cassidy. 'I think history would show that the negotiations have always been a prickly pear in terms of hiring that racecourse four times a year.'¹⁵⁵ In the 2005/06 racing season, the Club paid \$145,000 for the use of Eagle Farm for its four race meetings, but since then rental charges have risen considerably under both the QTC and the BRC:

\$193,000 (2006/07) \$240,000 (2009/10) \$324,000 (2010/11) \$370,000 (2013/14)¹⁵⁶

By 2015, the TRC was paying more than \$100,000 per meeting. John Foote believes the Club have been charged exorbitant amounts for many years now. 'It is now, and it was then – we were paying more money for Eagle Farm than we would have paid for Flemington,' he says.¹⁵⁷ Even so, the Club has had little choice but to continue its outlay, as President Bob Lette alluded to in 2013: 'It is either this or, as a Club, we withdraw from racing. Your Committee is not prepared to turn its back on 150 years of racing tradition without making

¹⁵³ TRCAR 2011/12 and 2014/15.

¹⁵⁴ TRCAR 2014/15.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Michael Cassidy, conducted by the author, 10 April 2015.

¹⁵⁶ TRCAR 2005/06, 2006/07, 2009/10, 2010/11, and 2013/14.

¹⁵⁷ Foote, 2016.

every effort to promote racing in general and retain Tattersall's proud name in the industry.¹⁵⁸ Cassidy recalls some of the most recent negotiations becoming 'a major hassle,' though he also concedes that this is very much a consequence of the current state of the industry. 'Because the BRC are themselves under enormous pressure,' he says, 'therefore they see that we should be paying more for our race meetings to help compensate.'¹⁵⁹

The situation became even more difficult for the Club due to the stance taken by the BRC Chairman Kevin Dixon between 2009 and 2012. 'He and I had a running battle about it,' recalls McCoy, who was Tattersall's president at the time. 'He didn't think we should be racing, and they tried to force us out by putting up our rentals to such an extent that it was almost impossible to keep racing.'¹⁶⁰ Cassidy believes that the position of Tattersall's remains something of a dilemma for the BRC overall. 'There is this tension that they're forced to negotiate with us,' he explains. 'But it's a catch-twenty-two situation: they'd like to see us out of the industry, but we're a dominant player in terms of our financial contribution. They've had to live with us, and they've had to negotiate – but from a very strong position, to our detriment.'¹⁶¹ The Club naturally feared the worst when Dixon was then appointed Chairman of Racing Queensland in 2012. However, this occurred under the LNP during Campbell Newman's premiership, which the Club was able to use to its advantage. 'We put a bit of work on a few of the LNP politicians to say, "Listen, if you throw Tattersall's out, it's not going to be very good for you, because the vast majority of the members are LNP supporters,"' recalls McCoy. 'They realised, and virtually put the directive to Newman, to Dixon: Tattersall's has got to stay.'¹⁶²

However, in early 2015 there was some suggestion that Racing Queensland was trying to take the Club's Group One race away and offer it to the BRC, which in turn has continued to raise the rental charges at Eagle Farm. It has certainly been a trying period for the TRC on several fronts. 'It's been very difficult to keep it going,' confirms Foote. 'The previous board of Racing Queensland weren't really pro-Tattersall's...I think it was mainly through the chairman,' he adds. 'Not a vendetta; it was just his own personal view. His idea was that we

¹⁵⁸ *Tattler*, Autumn 2013.

¹⁵⁹ Cassidy, 2015.

¹⁶⁰ McCoy, 2015.

¹⁶¹ Cassidy, 2015.

¹⁶² McCoy, 2015.

should just be a sponsor and that we shouldn't have our own race club.'¹⁶³ As alluded to, the TRC's position is also impacted by the government, which holds a significant influence over the personnel of the Racing Queensland board along with the potential policies and reviews that it carries out. 'You could be in favour with Racing Queensland for a couple of years,' explains Cassidy. 'But the next time you have a change of government, the board could change, the dynamics change – and you're left out in the cold.'¹⁶⁴

While the impact of such external factors cannot be downplayed, Tattersall's also needs the support of its members for its relationship with thoroughbred racing to continue. Although an obvious affiliation with the sport remains, there is no doubt that its status has continued to decline within the Club's identity. This is partly due to the diminished role that Tattersall's now performs in its own race days. Whereas the TRC used to offer the prizemoney and arrange the programme – in addition to providing the handicapper and racing stewards – that is no longer the case, and for many it has weakened the Club's association with racing. 'A lot of the time, you're more or less just a social club, because the actual racing content is done by Racing Queensland,' says McCoy. 'It's not the hands-on approach to racing, the actual nitty-gritty that it used to be – going back some years now where you actually were a race club and you provided the races.'¹⁶⁵ The situation could be worse: by way of comparison, Sydney Tattersall's Club is now even less involved, with its three or four race meetings each year run by the Australian Turf Club (as with the BRC in Queensland, the ATC formed as a necessary merger between the Australian Racing Club and the Sydney Turf Club in 2011). Sydney Tattersall's sponsor the meetings and have races named in its honour, but that's where its influence ends. 'They've lost their identity really,' laments McCoy.¹⁶⁶

The inescapable fact is that the membership body of Tattersall's, for the most part, is not as occupied with thoroughbred racing as it once was. 'The racing heritage of our Club will always be important,' remarks Cassidy. 'But it still has to be supported by a majority of Club members who, of recent times, have shown little interest in racing.'¹⁶⁷ This is perhaps an unsurprising consequence of the Club's fading racing character, especially when compared

¹⁶³ Foote, 2016.

¹⁶⁴ Cassidy, 2015.

¹⁶⁵ McCoy, 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Cassidy, 2015.

to its former position. 'In those days they would actually have a Tattersall's that settled racing disputes,' says McCoy. 'We ran our own race meetings – and actually ran them – and we were the venue for the bookmakers' settling. We still were a really integral player in racing.'¹⁶⁸ Peter Carroll also supports this view: 'I really think with the demise of Settling Day, for example, and the forced separation of the racing club from the main Club, members don't feel that innate, close connection to racing that was there previously.'¹⁶⁹ Even McCoy, a long-term supporter of both the sport and Tattersall's, concedes that the transformation is damning, while also acknowledging the impact of the broader changes in racing.

You see, when Tattersall's first started they were all betting and racing enthusiasts. But the Club's widened now...Probably the percentage of Tattersall's members who are really keen racing followers? I reckon if you said 10%, that would be pushing it...But again, it's just the way of world – it's just the change. Although I've been brought up on racing and I love it, I don't go to the races very often. In fact, probably the only days I go to the races are Tatts days, simply because now every race is on television. And you see more on TV – I like watching Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne; the horses parading beforehand, some of the interviews after it. I can sit there just with my phone, have a bet – why would I get dressed up to go the races? The money is off-course, not on-course.¹⁷⁰

With so many challenges facing both the thoroughbred industry and the Club's position within it, the future relationship looks inescapably bleak. 'It has always been an industry that has had a lot of bickering and infighting,' reflects Cassidy. 'And the TRC unfortunately gets caught up in these mechanisms.'¹⁷¹ Certainly, prior to the most recent agreement signed with the BRC, there was a degree of angst and uncertainty as to whether the Club should proceed. Given the ongoing support that Tattersall's provides to its racing entity, there is also a school of thought among some members that there should be distinct committeemen between the Club and the TRC because of the potential conflict of interest. 'Sometimes it is difficult to maintain the *raison d'être* for your existence, and you have to adjust,' concludes Carroll. 'And to a certain extent, we started changing a long time ago because we became a business club, and not just purely a club for people associated with the racing industry. The Club does have to change over time, but you'd like to see it continue to support racing because it's just so tied-up in what we are.'¹⁷² Or, perhaps more

¹⁶⁸ McCoy, 2015.

¹⁶⁹ Carroll, 2015.

¹⁷⁰ McCoy, 2015.

¹⁷¹ Cassidy, 2015.

¹⁷² Carroll, 2015.

accurately, what Tattersall's Club once was. This was further highlighted by the deletion of several long-standing rules relating to racing in the 2015 Rules' Review conducted by the Committee. While clauses regarding bookmaking, arbitration, betting and settling have long been obsolete, their removal still felt symbolic in terms of finality. Naturally, memorabilia and references to the 'Sport of Kings' can still be found throughout the Club today, and include numerous trophies, paintings and even a framed and autographed set of silks belonging to *Makybe Diva*. Considering the history of Tattersall's, such references should always be in place. While the importance of racing to the Club's heritage is undoubted, however, its role within the modern and future identity of Tattersall's remains less certain.



Fig. 68. The Club remains adorned with references to its racing heritage: (top) A painting of *Archer* by J. Cutts; (left) the 1826 Lambert Cup; (right) a polychrome thoroughbred with jockey. (Photos: Alex Lister and Dr Michael O'Shea, 2015-17).

Part Three: Conclusion

Despite the completion of a successful redevelopment in 1997, Tattersall's subsequently experienced one of the most challenging periods in its history as it tried to redefine itself in the twenty-first century. Difficulties concerning female membership, finance, leadership, direction, membership trends and usage, and the original lifeblood of Tattersall's – thoroughbred racing – have all tested and, in many cases, altered the Club.

Certainly, for a time in the early 2000s, it appeared that female membership at Tattersall's was imminent. The Club had transitioned into a modern institution of businessmen and professionals within new state-of-the-art facilities that were specifically built to cater for both men and women. Given the increased usage and access of the Club by women, it appeared a relatively small step to approve female membership. However, the issue carried enough significance to demand three separate votes in the space of four years, and its controversy perhaps caused more division within Tattersall's than at any other period in its history. Such disunity was in marked contrast to an institution that was almost unanimous in embracing the substantial alterations of the previous decade. While a natural progression for many, female membership represented a step too far for a slender majority, and the apparent optimism towards further change within the Club had seemingly underestimated an entrenched tradition. Given the mixed facilities and the surge in membership in the late 1990s, Tattersall's undoubtedly lost momentum in the wake of the redevelopment with the failure of the motion and the wave of bad publicity. Furthermore, in a climate of negative membership trends and usage, the saga has hardly inspired a reversal in fortunes.

While such significant change did not transpire in one instance – and through a fair and democratic process, it should be said – the Club has still had to adapt in response to other challenges presented this century. In the years immediately following the completion of the redevelopment, the Club struggled to meet the financial obligations regarding its substantial debt and interest payments – further exacerbated by the Hutchinson's dispute – and relied upon raising membership fees in 1998 and 2001 to secure additional income. While effective, the tactic also betrayed a sense of desperation – particularly the retrospective increase in 1998. Members who had joined the Club or agreed upon the new rate introduced in 1988 – itself a five-fold increase – did so on the premise of an upgraded Club,

not further rises. By 2002, subscription was over \$700 compared to \$250 in 1988, and the recurrent upsurges in fees could not go on indefinitely as a method of securing funds.

The Committee, meanwhile, witnessed several significant departures alongside long-term CEO Paul Jones, and by 2004 there was not a single committeeman left from the steady leadership that had guided the Club through the redevelopment in the 1990s. It was therefore the duty of a new committee to manage the burden of debt and steer Tattersall's in a new direction. In response, the Committee strengthened its position by taking on more expertise and responsibility within its sub-committees. The most notable effect was in finance, where a clear debt-reduction strategy was adopted along with the successful renegotiation of the redevelopment loan. By 2015, the Committee was still seeking improvement – not least in its own operation – and appropriate rule changes and evaluations were introduced to ensure a high level of performance. This has occurred during a period where, with one or two notable exceptions, the Club has struggled to find a long-standing CEO. By the close of 2015, the Club had hired its sixth CEO since the departure of Jones in 2000, and the quick turnover in many ways reflects the rapidly changing modern commercial and hospitality environment that Tattersall's operates within. A strong and comparatively stable Committee with clearly defined roles has therefore been essential.

Tattersall's growing commercial focus has been a necessary response to both the declining patronage of the Club by members and its need to produce additional revenue. While the former was a prevalent trend identified by the leadership at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it had actually begun much earlier. The 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s had all seen evening usage decrease at the Club, and while a revitalisation of attendances at events and overall Club performance was apparent throughout the 1990s, this had been greatly assisted by the influx of new members. Corporate and private functions were shrewdly identified as a key source of future income with the inclusion of large function areas in the redevelopment plans, and the initial forays into the external market in the 1990s have since been successfully built upon. The success of functions became even more important in supporting trade which was further hampered by the economic downturn from 2008.

Given the Club's substantial debt, it has been vital to run a profitable operation, and the most significant commercial contributor remains the Arcade. It was a central component of the Club's finances following the Edward Street move in 1926, and its steady income helped

maintain membership fees at a minimal rate for much of the twentieth-century. This in turn helped to encourage a waiting list that proved a valuable resource in its own right during the redevelopment. The decision to modernise and protect the Arcade as a viable long-term asset in the 1980s, however, has proven to be the most important and prescient decision in the Club's recent history. Not only did it help support the more extensive Stage Two of the redevelopment, which was also essential for the Club's survival, but its financial contribution so far this century has been crucial. Its total revenue has consistently increased – from around \$1 million in 1999 to over \$4.5 million by 2015 – and it is fair to conclude that the Arcade's rejuvenation has been both a clear success and a vital continuity. This success has, however, also provided a significant buffer against other difficulties facing the Club, which highlights the importance of guarding against any potential complacency in the future.

Tattersall's has also built upon its traditional Club activities with both energy and innovation. A range of new events were introduced to try and increase engagement with members and their guests, from various concerts to cigar appreciation nights. Some of the most successful – the Black-Tie Boxing and the Sportsman's Grill Night – are the result of well-devised new formats and inspired execution, while they also acknowledge the sporting tradition of the Club. The likes of the Art Prize and the Anzac Luncheon have similarly become modern-day staples of an events roster which, in terms of frequency and diversity, has been the most active in the Club's history. The surfeit of recent subsidiary clubs, meanwhile, also represents the successful renewal of an older tradition. With around 20% of the membership belonging to at least one, the sub-clubs have revitalised interest among the existing membership while adding value for new members to help counteract the negative trends facing the Club. At the time of writing, a Cycling Club looked set to become the eighth to form this century and the fourteenth overall. Both the sub-clubs and the social events have also continued to facilitate a strong sense of friendship among members at Tattersall's, which remains one of its defining features.

Tattersall's was once almost singularly defined by its association with thoroughbred racing, and it is this relationship that has presented the final challenge to confront the Club in recent years. This has predominantly resulted from the trying negotiations it has had to endure within a struggling and tension-fuelled industry, which has made the Club's position in racing increasingly difficult to sustain. In addition, the actual level of interest in the sport

among the Tattersall's membership is perhaps more negligible than ever, as a declining racing identity – which was evident throughout the twentieth-century – has continued its descent within the Club. Nonetheless, the TRC continues to hold four race meetings each year – and runs a prestigious Group One race – the crowds of which compare favourably with the meetings of other metropolitan race clubs. Within the Club itself, the Melbourne Cup Luncheon and the two Calcuttas also remain significant events in the social calendar. On a broader scale, there is a sense of perpetuity regarding the affinity given the Club's history – particularly its name and establishment – and the main Club Room (or Members' Bar), which was of course inspired by the design of the original Tattersall's Repository. Assorted sporting memorabilia throughout the Club also provides a lasting reference. In this respect, Tattersall's will always be interminably linked with racing. It is fair to conclude, however, that the Club's active role within the thoroughbred industry could become less permanent.

Despite its many successes, however, challenges remain at Tattersall's. Daily usage is still a problem as exemplified by the drop-off in the once defining luncheon tradition. While external functions have proven to be an astute recent adjustment of the Club's business model – and in many ways a modern extension of its renowned hospitality – it is an avenue that faces intense competition. Similarly, although recent additions such as the Health Centre and accommodation are first-rate, they are also services operating in a highly competitive market. In addition, their use is restricted to members and their families or associates and, while such exclusivity is an attraction for some, it does limit their overall availability. This balance between maintaining exclusivity while facilitating further accessibility is, of course, an ongoing challenge for the Club in itself.

In a more general sense, the growing corporate focus of Tattersall's presents a potential threat to the Club's traditional identity. Of course, the success and importance of such commercial activities is indisputable, especially in the wake of the declining usage by members – which largely provoked the need for a change in outlook in the first place. However, there is an obvious desire to avoid any dilution of the character of the Club. Many clubs must now operate with a commercial pillar, but not at the expense of becoming faceless brands. In the case of Tattersall's, while acknowledging the importance of its buildings, activities, events and motto, it is ultimately the people that reflect the tradition of the Club, be it the membership, staff or guests. There are those who provide a link to its

past and the values that have underpinned its success, but also those who can inspire the appropriate changes and help shape the Club's future. Naturally, it is the responsibility of everyone currently connected with Tattersall's to ensure that it upholds its philosophy.

Overall, Tattersall's Club has successfully managed several challenges that arose in the early stages of the twenty-first century. Its response involved the instigation of change, from the embracement of a more corporate outlook as part of its operation, to a greater focus on financial management regarding its debt strategy. Tattersall's approach has, however, also built upon long-held customs of the Club, most noticeably in the recent expansion of its subsidiary clubs and the development of its popular social events calendar. Although it remains a challenging time for the club industry generally, Tattersall's has continued to benefit from the decision to redevelop its premises in the 1990s, and while its commercial success is largely indebted to its modern operation and enhanced facilities – not least the Arcade – its survival as a club remains largely dependent upon its continued ability to balance both tradition with advancement, and friendship with life.

Epilogue

The modern-day Tattersall's Club is an undeniably different institution from the one which formed in 1883. While the Club's original members included prominent local businessmen, professionals and proprietors as well as bookmakers, horse owners and horse auctioneers, they were all brought together through their passion for thoroughbred racing. Indeed, when Tattersall's applied for a licencing certificate twenty years later, its objectives were listed as 'racing, social, and providing accommodation and meat and drink for the members thereof and their guests' – and such a hierarchy was a fair reflection of priorities.¹ Since that time, Tattersall's has been referred to as a bookmakers' club, a betting club, a racing club, a sporting club, a social club, a gentlemen's club, a luncheon club and a businessmen's club, but it has rarely – perhaps never – adopted a single identity. This ability to change and adapt has been the Club's greatest skill – and, paradoxically, its greatest continuity – as its success and survival has not had to rely upon a single cause. If Tattersall's has been dependent on

¹ Longhurst, *Friendship is Life*, 100.

one characteristic to join its disparate strands together, then it has been friendship – a quality which has permeated every incarnation of the Club.

The original focus and role of Tattersall's within the thoroughbred industry ultimately faded as the Club simultaneously continued to diversify its interests amid the demands of a growing and changing membership. A snapshot of its varied history can be gathered by simply reflecting upon what has actually taken place inside Tattersall's. In addition to the Club's bookmakers, businessmen and professionals, it has – throughout the years – hosted sportsmen, politicians, musicians, aviators, and military personnel. Activities as routine as drinking, smoking, betting, settling and gaming have been interspersed with both lively and decorous occasions of dining and dancing, while numerous sporting activities including boxing, indoor bowls, badminton and jiu-jitsu have also taken place within the Club's walls. Other events have included art exhibitions, concerts, weddings and an abundance of meetings and functions, large and small. Amid such a range, the click of the billiard tables and the rendezvous of old friends or new associates over refreshments remains ever present. In many ways, it is the simple pleasures of socialising and participation within pleasant, homely surroundings that have endured the most throughout the Club's long history, while such pastimes have naturally supported its unyielding ethos.

The Club's surroundings have clearly been imperative towards its survival. As Tattersall's built up its membership base and finances in the decades following its inception, it found a crucial way forward with the construction of its own clubhouse in 1926. Ideally situated within the CBD of a growing city, the new premises also embodied the characteristics of the traditional gentlemen's club. While a significant change at the time, the buildings – and their subsequent expansion and redevelopment – have become one of Tattersall's greatest continuities. The premises remain intrinsically linked with the experiences of both members and guests, while they also represent the club's ability to adapt, from the luncheons in the Dining Hall to the numerous events in the function rooms. Again, it is this ability to change – be it in the face of adversity, necessity, or in anticipation of future trends – that has led to Tattersall's current position of strength. In addition to private membership, the Club today offers a mixture of both customary and modern services including professional networking, food and beverage, accommodation, venue hire for corporate and private functions, a health and wellness centre, a multitude of diverse and exclusive events and a growing

network of sporting and special interest subsidiary clubs. Aside from the activities of some of the sub-clubs, all these amenities are found at premises which offer both modern facilities and revered heritage value within some of Brisbane's finest architecture.

While it is always sensible to exercise a degree of caution, the modern-day Tattersall's Club remains in an excellent position. Its 2015 membership of over 5,000 surpassed the numbers held by any comparable club in Queensland and continued to reflect a strong and influential body. Nearly 50% of the current membership consist of CEOs, business managers, company directors and those involved in the legal fraternity or finance; the other half are predominantly made up of those in medicine, real estate, sales and marketing, small businesses, consultancy, architecture, teaching, dentistry, government, education, farming and retirees.² Although perhaps no longer brought together by thoroughbred racing, the membership still represents a vibrant cross section of Queensland society. Financially, the Club posted annual profits of around \$1 million between 2010 and 2015, while its debt is due to be cleared by the early 2020s. There is no doubt that challenges remain and will continue to surface as the Club continues to redefine itself in the twenty-first century. However, it is easy to put faith in the future of Tattersall's Club when considering its rich history, which has consistently proven that an enduring belief in friendship, and an innate ability to balance change and continuity, will always ensure its success and survival.

² Tattersall's Membership Business Plan 2016.



(Photo: Rene Marcel, 1997).

List of References

Unpublished / Archival Sources

John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

R503: Tattersall's Club collection

Box 6151: Tattersall's newspaper scrapbook 1902-40.

Box 6153: Ray Conway's handwritten recollections, 1958.

Box 6155: Tattersall's newspaper scrapbook 1946-58.

Box 6158: Tattersall's members' register 1917-24.

Box 6162: Cassette interviews with Bill Boyan, Ron Clelland, J. T. Delaney, and Claude Jacobs.

Box 6163: Tattersall's minute book 1902-08. Tattersall's minute book 1920-25.

Box 6168: Tattersall's minute book January 1982 – February 1902.

Tattersall's Club, Brisbane

Bill Boyan. *Tattersall's Club Centenary: 1883 – 1983*. Brisbane: Courier-Mail Printing Service, 1983.

Hall, Phillips and Wilson, "Tattersall's Club: Proposed redecoration of Club Rooms." July 1968.

Memorandum issued to members, October 2006.

Minutes of Tattersall's 'Back-Seat' cricketers 1933.

Rules of Tattersall's Club, 2016.

The Tattler newsletter, 1960-1992.

The Tattler magazine, 1993-2015 (quotes are from interviews conducted for the magazine by Tony Walsh 1993-2013 and Candice Rose 2014-2015).

Tattersall's Committee Memorandum to members, February 1988.

Tattersall's Club Annual Reports, 1960-2015.

Tattersall's Club Magazine, July 1930-May 1931.

Tattersall's Membership Business Plan, 2016.

Tattersall's Club minutes, 1986-1995.

Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Souvenir and Retrospect. Brisbane: Roberts & Russell, 1926.

Tattersall's Club: Illustrated Anniversary Celebration. Brisbane: Jackson & Sullivan, 1951.

Tattersall's Racing Club Annual Reports, 1960-2015.

Miscellaneous

Brisbane Racing Club Annual Report 2012/13

BTC and QTC Amalgamation Proposal 2008.

Longhurst, Robert. History of the Queensland Turf Club, unpublished.

Heritage Buildings Protection Act 1990. No. 36.

National Trust of Queensland. "Community and Conservation Experts lose to lawyers." Unpublished media release, 21 December 1993.

National Trust of Queensland, "Ascot Chambers still a Heritage Site." Unpublished media release, 26 December 1993.

Planning and Environmental Court. "Appeal 169 of 1993: Between Advance Bank Australia Limited and the Queensland Heritage Council, 8-19th November. Reasons for Judgement."

Interviews

The following interviews were conducted by the author:

Jonathan Bloxsom, 15 March 2016.

Peter Carroll, 18 September 2015.

Michael Cassidy, 10 April 2015.

Michael Cassidy, 19 April 2016.

Jonathan Cauldwell, 25 November 2015.

Greg Clarke, 15 January 2016.

John Danaher, 12 June 2016.

John Foote, 16 March 2016.

Graeme Fry, 18 September 2015.

Virginia Jenson, 26 February 2016.

Paul Jones, 27 August 2015.

Ken Leitch, 29 February 2016.

John McCoy, 14 April 2015.

Liam O'Brien, 15 January 2016.

Eric Oxenford, 5 May 2015.
Monica Phillips, 28 October 2015.
Ed Profke, 22 January 2016.
Bart Sinclair, 5 May 2015.
Michael Sparksman, 11 August 2015.
Adrian Symons, 15 January 2016.
Nowell Taylor, 11 September 2015.

The following interviews were conducted by Helen Gregory, unless otherwise stated:

Bill Boyan, 7 May 1991.
Claude Jacobs, 24 July 1991.
J. T. Delaney, 2 May 1991.
Ron Clelland, 5 June 1991.
Merv Cooper, Kevin Kent and Stan Schluter, 14 August 2006. By John McCoy.
Paul Jones, 18 November 2013. By Olivia Johnson and Brendan Walsh.
Finn Rasmussen, 18 November 2013. By Olivia Johnson and Brendan Walsh.

Newspapers

Australian Town and Country Journal (Sydney).
Bell's Life in Sydney.
Brisbane Courier.
Brisbane Telegraph.
Central Queensland Herald (Rockhampton).
Chronicle (Toowoomba).
City News (Brisbane).
Courier-Mail (Brisbane).
Daily Mail (Brisbane).
Daily Standard (Brisbane).
Evening News (Rockhampton).
Gold Coast Bulletin.
Herald Sun (Melbourne).

Manillia Express.
Moreton Bay Courier (Brisbane).
North-West Star (Mount Isa).
Northern Mining Register (Charters Towers).
Queenslander (Brisbane).
Queensland Times (Ipswich).
Queensland Figaro (Brisbane).
Referee (Sydney).
Smith's Weekly (Sydney).
Sports Observer (Brisbane).
Sydney Gazette.
Sydney Morning Herald.
Sun-Herald (Sydney).
Sunday Mail (Sydney).
Sunday Sun (Melbourne).
Sunday Telegraph (Sydney).
Telegraph (Brisbane).
Truth (Brisbane).
Truth (Sydney).
Week (Brisbane).
Weekend Australian (Sydney).

Secondary Sources

Books

Besant, Walter. *London in the Nineteenth-Century*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1909.

Bell, Joshua Peter. *Queensland Club 1859 – 1959*. Brisbane: Queensland Club, 1966.

Black, Barbara. *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012.

Cameron, Ian. *125 Years of State Public Works in Queensland 1850-1984*. Bowen Hills: Boolarong Publications, 1989.

- Collins, James L. & Thompson, Geoff H. *Harking Back – The Turf: Its Men and Memories*. Brisbane: Standard Press, 1924.
- Coughlan, Helen. *Queensland Turf Club: A Place in History*. Brisbane: Boolarong Press, 2009.
- Evans, Raymond. *A History of Queensland*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Howell, Reet A, & Howell, Maxwell L. *The Genesis of Sport in Queensland*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1992.
- Fitzgerald, Ross, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons. *Made in Queensland: A New History*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2009.
- Freedman, Harold & Lemon, Andrew. *The History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing vol. 2*. Melbourne: Southbank Communications Group, 1990.
- Lawson, Ronald. *Brisbane in the 1890s*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1973.
- Longhurst, Robert. *Friendship is Life: A History of Tattersall's Club*. Brisbane: Tattersall's Club, 1993.
- Milne-Smith, Amy. *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Nevill, Ralph. *London Clubs: Their History and Treasury*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1911.
- Thomis, Malcolm I. *The Brisbane Club*. Milton, Queensland: Jacaranda Press, 1980.

Chapters in books

- Cohen, Kay. "The TAB in Queensland: some aspects of its operation." In *Gamblers' Paradise*, edited by John Kerr. Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 1996.
- Hampson, Alice. "Tattersall's Club Dining Room." In *Brisbane Art Deco: Stories of our Built Heritage*, ed. Kimberley J. Wilson. Brisbane: Jubilee Studios, 2015.
- O'Hara, John. "Horseracing and Betting in Queensland." In *Gamblers' Paradise*, edited by John Kerr. Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 1996.

Miscellaneous

- Australian Club Centenary*. Sydney: John Andrew & Co., 1939.
- Cavalcade of Queensland Sport: 1901 – 1951. Brisbane: Merchandising Services, 1951.
- Queensland Official Yearbook (1901).