

## ***A History of the Football Club, Harker Oval and the Leagues Club***



### **History of the WSRLFC**

Western Suburbs, together with South Newcastle, Central Newcastle and North Newcastle, were the 4 inaugural teams in the Newcastle Rugby League Competition that commenced on the 14th May 1910. These 4 clubs played for the Potter Shield.

West Suburbs Rugby League Club was formed mainly by players from Lambton Rugby Union Club (the Maroons), and New Lambton Rugby Union Club (the Greens) and many players came from the coal mines in the "Pit Paddock" on the border between Lambton and New Lambton where the high quality "Lambton" coal was mined. The players were dissatisfied with Rugby Union, hence West Rugby League Club was formed, and played in the colours of Red and Green - the red from Lambton Rugby Club and the green from New Lambton Rugby Club.

The foundation meeting of the club was held at Smiths Pub in Lambton (now the "Snake Gully"). Bill Balks was elected as President, Tom Shiner as Secretary and Bill Phillips as Treasurer.

West's first game on the 14th May 1910 was against South, with the final score being South 18, West 0. Ted Rees was the referee, and the 12 West players were Bradley, Bartley, Kay, Edney, Brien, Milgate, Thornton, Young, Long, Lewsam, Anderton and Thompson.

West won the Potter Shield in 1915 (West 16, North 8), in 1916 (West 10, North 8) and in 1922 West won the Cornish Shield and Kerr Cup (West 5, Central 0). Full details of these games (date, venue, referee, teams, premiership points score) can be found on the West website – [www.westrosellas.com.au](http://www.westrosellas.com.au).

In 1926 there was upheaval in the Western Suburbs camp by the players who lived at Waratah. Thus all the Waratah players departed West in 1927 to play with the newly formed Waratah club. 1926 was not a good year for West, and in 1927 a new approach was needed. Indeed, the new approach meant "new colours" - Black and Gold. Black and Gold were chosen because they were the colours of the Regent Bower Bird that was prevalent in the area at the time. The colours of New Lambton Public School were, and still are, Black and Gold, after the Regent Bower Bird. Regent Park and Regent Street are still in New Lambton.

However, the change of colours did not mean a successful year, and from 1928 onwards West have played in Red and Green as the Western Suburbs Rosellas - well almost every year. During the war years jerseys were hard to come by - you took what you could get. Thus in 1945 West played in maroon with a blue V, and in 1946 they played in maroon with a green V.

West remained the easybeats for many years, and it took 39 years for West to again win a First Grade Premiership when West, under player coach Rex Elvin, beat Waratah 10 - 9 in the 1961 Grand Final.

Further successes have occurred regularly since then. In 1966 West 31 def Cessnock 7, in 1970 West 21 def Maitland 14, in 1978 West 23 def South 16, in 1980 West 17 def Cessnock 3, in 1981 West 13 def Cessnock 2, in 1982 West 21 def Kurri 14, in 1984 West 10 def Lakes 2, in 1992 West 33 def Lakes 0, in 1997 West 26 def Lakes 16, in 1998 West 51 def South 14, in 1999 West 22 def Cessnock 18, in 2002 West 27 def Lakes 16, in 2004 West 32 def Northern Blues 28, in 2008 West 12 def Cessnock 10 and in 2012 West 16 def Cessnock 14. Details of all these games are also on the website.

16 Grand Final wins from 1961 have been tempered by 12 Grand Final losses, including 4 successive years from 1973, and 4 successive years from 1993.

West have also enjoyed many successes in the Lower Grades and in the Club Championship.

Three players have been chosen directly from West to play for Australia - Allan Buman, John Cootes and Dennis Ward. Seven other players who played for West also played for Australia - Duncan Thompson, Wally Prigg, Col Maxwell, Ian Johnson, Keith Froome, Ken Maddison and John Raper.

The player who has played most games for West is Allan Dagwell (1966 - 1980). Allan played a total of 332 games, including 301 in First Grade. The leading try scorer for the club is Brett Cullen (1995 - 2004) with 230 tries. The leading goal kicker for the club is Scott Bradley (1992 - 2000) with 948 goals. Although over 130 players have played over 100 games for West, 2 Players, Greg Price (1988 - 1998) and John Hulbert (1976 - 1987) played over 100 games in First Grade and 100 games in Reserve Grade.

West Officials are also listed on the website. ([www.westrosellas.com.au](http://www.westrosellas.com.au)) Long Serving Presidents include Harry Harding (18 years from 1958) and current President Wayne Hore (22 years from 1990). The longest serving Secretary was West Legend Glen Maloney (23 years from 1953). The longest serving Treasurer was Jack Bell (43 years from 1951). The longest serving First Grade Coaches, 4 years, are John Hobby (from 1966), Neil Baker (from 1991) and Tony Price (from 1996). Comprehensive playing records of all West players from 1951 to 2008 are on this website. Additionally, all details of First Grade Grand Final wins, and further information about lower grades and club officials are also on the website.

This information will be added to from time to time, but we acknowledge excerpts from "The Saga of the Western Men" by Bob Power (1966), the extensive records held by Kerry Clarke and the countless hours notating these records by West Officials over the past decades.

## **THE STORY OF HARKER OVAL**

Harker Memorial Oval was previously named The New Lambton Oval (a very flat ground and surrounds) when it was first opened for Rugby League and Cricket use in May 1932. The New Lambton Oval Board was formed by the New Lambton Municipal Council in 1932 to oversee the new ground. The Oval Board



had 11 members, representatives of the Council, the Ratepayers, Lambton New Lambton District Cricket Club and the Western Suburbs Rugby League Football Club. (The Harker Oval Board is still in existence today). The New Lambton Oval Board first met on May 18 1932. A Grandstand to seat 600 people was opened on May 22 1933 and weatherboard fencing was erected to enclose the ground. The Newcastle League paid twelve and a half percent of the gate receipts to the Oval Board, plus the sale of season tickets went to the Oval Board.

In 1934 there was a complete renovation of the playing field, and Hobart Park (now a residential area) was hired for the football season.

In 1938 an amalgamation of Municipal Councils meant improvements by Newcastle City Council - the most notable improvement being the construction of the "hill". The grandstand was also extended. The ground was then, and remains now, one of the most popular grounds from a spectators point of view on account of the playing field being so close to the spectators.

In 1954, Newcastle City Council, at the Oval Boards request, named the ground The Alfred Harker Memorial Ground, as a tribute to the late Dr Harker, who for 46 years served unselfishly the community, and was the medical officer for the Western Suburbs Rugby League Football Club.

The clock tower was erected by public subscription, with the rest of the entrance being provided by Newcastle Council.

The late Harry Harding, President of the football club, took an active role with the Oval Board, as does the current President of the football club, Wayne Hore.

## **THE HISTORY OF WEST LEAGUES CLUB**

The Foundation meeting of West Leagues Club was held on 14 November 1957.

The Foundation members were : H Parkinson, R Walls, J Morgan, W Curry, E Maddison, A Caunt, G Maloney, H Harding, D J Carroll, A Arnold, W Rynehart, J Harvey, A Steel, J Aitchison, W McGrath, J Bell, H M Carroll, D

Marshall, S Patrick, T Robinson, W Jukes, J Reynolds, A Proudlock, G Williams, J Allen, D Howlett and A Kentish. The Foundation committee elected at the meeting were

President H Harding

Secretary G Maloney

Treasurer J Bell

Ass Secretary J Aitchison

The initial committee along with L B O'Sullivan drafted rules which were adopted on 28 November 1957, at which the following seven were elected as the First Board of Directors President H Harding

Hon Secretary G Maloney Treasurer J Bell

Directors D Carroll, J Aitchison, J Harvey, W Jukes. A Conditional License was approved in Sydney at a special sitting of the Newcastle Licensing Court on 10 April 1959. The initial building was completed and opened for use on Saturday 24 September 1960. A new members bar opened for service on Tuesday 4 February 1964. A temporary mixed lounge and bar service opened in March 1964. The new billiard room and recreation room, with showers and toilets, opened on Friday 5 March 1965.....and from little things big things grow!

The Wests Group now operates

- Five Clubs
  - Western Suburbs (N'Cle) Leagues Club
  - Wests Mayfield
  - Wests Cardiff

- Nelson Bay Diggers
- Wests Bowling Club (New Lambton)
- Four Balance Health Clubs at New Lambton, Mayfield, Nelson Bay and Newcastle City
- Three quality Inns – the Executive Inn at New Lambton, the Gateway Inn at Mayfield and The Anchorage at Salamander Bay

As at December 2012 the West Group of Clubs has in excess of 120 000 members.

The success of the West Group can be traced to the commitment of officials to the West brand, to the integrity of officials over the past 50 years and to the progressive thinking and vision of the leaders to ensure that West diversifies and caters for an ever expanding range of members – in a nutshell the officials have personified the Football Club slogan that “West is Best”.



## Wests (New Lambton)

### **Club Leaders since the inception of Western Suburbs Leagues Club**

<i>Glen Maloney</i>	- <i>Secretary / Manager</i>
<i>Peter Johansen</i>	- <i>Secretary / Manager</i>
<i>Owen Kilpatrick</i>	- <i>Short term caretaker Secretary / Manager</i>
<i>Bob Ferris</i>	- <i>General Manager</i>
<i>Philip Gardner</i>	- <i>Chief Executive Officer (from 1995 to present)</i>

## Club Directors since the inception of Western Suburbs Leagues Club

Glen Maloney (D)	1960 to 1961 *	
Harry Harding (P) (D)	1960 to 1975	<i>(President 1960 to 1975)</i>
Jack Bell (D)	1960 to 1961	
Bill Jukes (D)	1960 to 1960 **	
Doug Carroll (D)	1960 to 1980	
Jack Harvey (D)	1960 to 1964 **, 1975 to 1981	
Jack Aitchison (P) (D)	1960 to 1987	<i>(President 1975 to 1980)</i>
Mick Caunt (D)	1961 to 1962 **	
Arthur Kentish (D)	1961 to 1992	
Bruce O'Sullivan (D)	1962 to 1998	
Kevin McDougall (P)	1963 to November 2010	<i>(President 1980 to 2006)</i>
Jack McDermott (D)	1964 to 1971	
Owen Kilpatrick	1971 to present	<i>(President May 2006 to present)</i>
Kevin Cook (D)	1980 to 1987	
Wayne Hore	1981 to present	
Michael Braggett (D)	1987 to 2001	
Gary Martine	1988 to 1990	
Don McDougall	1990 to February 2011	
Geoff Coburn	1993 to present	
John McLaughlin	1998 to present	
Jack Ashman	2002 to present	
Robert Darcy	2010 to present	
Scott Holmes	2011 to present	

### Legend:

- P = President
- D = Deceased
- \* = Resigned Board to become Secretary Manager
- \*\* = Resigned Board to become employee of Wests



**Wests (Mayfield)**



**Nelson Bay Diggers**