

HSTY3902 Project Diary

Week 2: 3/8 – 9/8

Started to consider the types of organizations I might be both interested in and have some prior knowledge of. One promising option was local sports clubs. Sport occupies a significant role in Australian culture but sports history tends to be shunned by academic historians.

Spent some time looking around for historical societies with a sports focus. Many are web-based communities, uploading archived material to freely available websites when it becomes available e.g. Australian Online Football Museum (www.ozfootball.net) and the Migration Heritage Center (<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/worldcup/index.shtml>).

Was put in contact with the local football (soccer) club Hurlstone Park Wanderers by a friend with links to the football community. Received an enthusiastic response and organized a time to meet face-to-face in the next week. The President of the club, Paul Kougias, was keen to talk about a football tournament hosted by his club in the 1950s called the Canterbury Cup. He sends me a document that someone from the club has compiled for the recent 90th anniversary dinner. It contains various accounts and recollections from the period. Though quite rough, it gives me a good indication of where to start.

Week 3: 10-8 – 16/8

Spent time doing some research on local football history in preparation for my face-to-face meeting. While there exists a large body of literature on the history of football in Australia (particularly the impact of post WWII southern European migrants), I could find no mention of the Canterbury Cup in scholarly and popular titles. Did uncover a few brief mentions of it in community newspapers from the period – in particular *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*.

Met Paul Kougias at Hurlstone Park RSL Club and spent an hour chatting over coffee. At this stage he is quite vague about what this particular project might

look like. This is understandable as he does not have formal training in history, but he expresses a strong desire to uncover and memorialize the history of his club. I was surprised to discover that the club does not possess any records from the period. Rather, Paul has been talking to a group of men who played for the club during the 1950s. He would like their stories to be heard.

I tried to focus the discussion on small, achievable outcomes. Might we record these stories and display them on the website? Could we include them in a more general history of this football tournament? I am conscious of appearing to dictate the direction of the project, but it feels necessary in order to reign in the size of Paul's ideas.

We decide to put a notice in the club's newsletter asking for anyone with documents, pictures or stories from the period to get in contact. Paul promised to put me in contact with another local club that may have records from the period.

Weeks 4-6: 17/8 – 6/9

Playing the waiting game in the search for primary sources. As the club lacks an archive, we have been forced to look elsewhere for records of the period. While this initially seemed like a difficult constraint, it has actually helped me improve my research skills. It has forced me to think hard about what sources are relevant and how I can find them.

As with a lot of sports history, many sources are held privately. Recognizing this, I compiled a list of individuals and clubs to make contact with. I chose the clubs based on the rough testimony in the document Paul had sent me a few weeks back. I made contact with ten clubs in total.

Paul provided me with a few other contacts that could potentially be of use. With Paul as a reference, I contacted the Canterbury Football Association, the Canterbury Public School 1950s Reunion Committee and the Johnnie Warren Football Foundation. I contacted a number of football historians through Twitter

to seek advice about where to look for sources from this period. I also created a flyer, which Paul attached to the club newsletter that goes out to all club members.

The little feedback I received was not particularly promising. Most clubs had never heard of the tournament and none had records from this period. Some promised to check with surviving members of their clubs who might have been around during the 1950s.

Week 7: 7/9 – 13-9

With the correspondence ongoing, I decided to sift through some more traditional sources. I spent two days in the State Library of NSW browsing community newspapers from the 1950s. Interestingly, while their football coverage was often quite detailed, it focused exclusively on district association games. Whether these publications ignored the tournament due to its ethnic flavor is difficult to ascertain. Specialized football publications only emerged from the mid-1960s when ethnic clubs started to play a role in the game's administration.

Paul and I had a chat about what the final product might look like. I suggested that due to our reliance on the testimony of the former players, we might make a video. We could then tell the story of the tournament using the voices of the people who were there. It would also be something the club could share across its online and social media platforms, in line with our stated objective of getting this story across to as many young people as possible.

Week 8: 14/9 – 20/9

With player testimony emerging as the most important source, I am impatient to make contact with the players and hear what they have to say and how they might like the project to look. Paul controls my access to these players, but he has headed off on a two week holiday to Greece, which I discover only when he answers the phone from Santorini.

In order to get a bit of context I had a look through some Australian historical migration statistics, which are freely available through the Department of Immigration and Border Protection website. The data is quite detailed and gives a yearly breakdown of the numbers of long-term arrivals based on country of origin. Interestingly, a lot of the ethnicities represented in the Canterbury Cup had large numbers of arrivals in the middle to later part of the 1950s, particularly Hungary and Greece.

Week 9 + Mid Semester Break: 21/9 – 4/10

Starting to bear the fruits of making early contact with other football clubs. Have had responses from Sydney Olympic, St George and Hakoah FC. The latter were particularly helpful, putting me in touch with an old club member called Bernie Jacoby who was heavily involved in the 1950s. He was very helpful and generous with his time – I cold-called him and we ended up speaking for over half an hour. He had fond memories of the period, and while he couldn't provide specific information about the Canterbury Cup, he did give me a different perspective. Though HPWFC are the focus of the story, theirs was an Anglo-British history up until this point, so it is important to hear what migrants themselves thought about playing football in this era.

Everyone that I speak to about this project is happy to help in any way they can. I have had almost no negative feedback. Cold calling people (who are almost always elderly, hard of hearing and without strong English) has been a challenge, but once I have explained what I am looking for they are very cooperative. Most have questions of their own (How old are you? Are you Greek? Why do you want to know this?).

Week 10: 5/10 – 11/10

Have finally got my hands on some tangible sources! Paul unearthed some trophies and old annual reports that we promptly photographed and put away

for safekeeping. If nothing else, this project has helped the club (through Paul) see the worth of maintaining records of its history.

Week 11: 12/10 – 18/10

Made contact with the chief organizer and spokesperson of the former HPWFC players, Tom Cornforth. Tom has spent years searching for many of his old teammates (often via physical letters in the mail! In 2015!). We organized a time for him to come down to Sydney (he lives in Port Macquarie) and give some testimony for our project. We were a little disappointed to hear that a lot of the other old players are either not in good health, or he has lost contact with them. Instead he sends me copies of his correspondence with them, which turn out to be a valuable source of memories. I decide to transcribe these letters to keep as an archive for HPWFC.

I also had a very productive meeting with the President of the Canterbury Football Association, Ian Holmes. He is another person who has been tirelessly retracing the lost history of football in the area. I was excited to meet Ian as it offers a possibility for further growth of the project beyond its current scope. The Association has moved into new offices and hopes to establish an archive of Canterbury football history. There is a big crossover between the work that I have been doing for HPWFC and what Ian is doing at the Association. Ian also has a vast network of contacts in the football community, and provides me with a number of good sources for the Canterbury Cup project. He is very busy with other matters (like running the Association!), so we plan to meet again in a few weeks. I hope to maintain contact with Ian beyond this project - I strongly believe in what he is doing. Football is rarely mentioned in official histories of the area (e.g. Canterbury library collection) and yet it was one of the most popular local sports for much of the twentieth century. In contrast, rugby league, and particularly the Canterbury Bulldogs, have been mythologized in all the local histories.

Week 12/13: 19/10 – 1/11

Spent most of the week preparing to interview Tom Cornforth. Transcribed the letters he had sent me and compiled all the documents and photos I have uncovered so far. As Tom is the only interviewee, we have decided to interview him on film and use his comments as colour for a short video about the Canterbury Cup.

Met with Paul and Tom at Blick Oval in Canturbury on Monday morning. Took plenty of footage of the oval itself before they arrived to help with editing. The interview itself was an interesting experience. I found that once I switched the camera on, Tom became less comfortable. To overcome this I spent at least five minutes making idle conversation before I asked a prepared question. I also attempted to keep the questions as open as possible, hoping not to lead him to any conclusions. His natural chattiness and curiosity definitely helped in this regard.

Now that I have the footage, the bulk of my research is complete and I will spend the next two weeks thinking exclusively about the final product. If nothing else, we will have an entertaining and enlightening interview with a former player. I will rewrite a section of the club's website dedicated to the tournament. The goal is to finish a short, polished video that covers the details of the tournament and explains why it was important to HPWFC.