

## Keynote address delivered by Brian Stapleton, Club Patron, on the occasion of the 50th Jubilee of Te Puke Sports & Recreation - April 2014

Guest of Honour Mrs Betty Freeman, special guests, Honourable Mr McClay, the Simpson Family, the Collins Family, Life Members, Mr President, Club Members (past and present).

I look around the room tonight and see many generations. In addition to our special guests we have many second, third and fourth generation family members with us here tonight. I see Ray Burt with us here tonight. (A member of the original Old Boys Club. Ray was at the meeting when the Old Boys Club was formed in 1947). John Jensen from the same club and era.

I see Mrs Shirley Hodges, Shirley is the sister of Rob Hood. (Tragically Rob lost his life in a motor accident 50 years ago. The Rob Hood Memorial Trophy has been awarded every year since that time.)

We have a fifth generation family member in attendance tonight. Michael Hinaki played for our Premier team today. Michael is the great, great Grandson of our late Patron Mr A. J. Collins. It is no wonder AJ's legend lives on. AJ was once quoted....IF RUGBY WERE A RELIGION I WOULD BE A SAINT.

We celebrate this weekend with tremendous pride. Today I looked at the manicured fields our teams played on; arguably as good as any playing field in New Zealand. I looked at the lighting; installed to a standard capable of holding night games. I looked at the Club House; built to standards capable of hosting large functions complete with a full sized gymnasium built to national standards along with players amenities consistent with those expected to be seen at provincial level. Many of our more senior club members will remember having to prepare for games in the back of a builder's shed or maybe in earlier times, behind the barberry bushes where the horses were tethered.

We have come a long way.....

Visitors have often commented that this facility, along with its administration is more typical of a sophisticated professional business, not the voluntary Sports Club we actually are. None of this has happened by accident. The evolution has been well planned and orchestrated by many staunch members and administrators over the last one hundred years. For example, the average term of Presidency has been nine years. Our current President Ash Peat, along with his Secretary / Treasurer Deborah Keenleyside and Club Captain Kim Hinaki have held their positions as a team for nearly twenty years. Digest that and it will help you to understand stability.

We have an enviable and tremendously valuable structure that needs to be nurtured and taken in to the future. The culture that has been passed down through the decades is something that every one of us here needs to be particularly proud of.

There are no guarantees that we will be playing in this competition in years to come. In days gone by we played locally, in Rotorua, Tauranga, Western Bay and then Baywide. Is there another step such as Bay of Plenty and Waikato combined?

If there are changes we need to be ready to accept the challenge and lead the way as we have proven we are so capable of doing.

As Patron I acknowledge the people who are not recognised and never expect to be. Take a look at the people next to you, and the rest of the people here tonight. You are all part of the pride and passion this club is all about.

I have been closely associated with Richard Hannay and Arthur Ball in the production of the History of the Club. I can assure you Richard and Arthur had a real dilemma in naming or not naming our unsung heroes, both members and sponsors. To me you are all "The Unsung Heroes". Without you we are nothing and we have no future. My "Unsung Heroes" include the JAB, the Builders and Electricians, the Coaches and Managers, the Caterers, the Ball Boys, the Time Keepers, the Ground Keepers, the St. Johns, the Cleaners and the Administrators and so the list goes on.

With regard to our sponsors, we have many who put their hands up year after year. There are far too many to name for fear of missing many. I will however single out Murray and Heather Salt. They have been our major sponsors for I cannot remember how many years. Thank you.

Thank you to our historians. Richard Hannay and Arthur Ball for their two years of research and publication of our club history.

As our club Number Plate Surround states: "Small Club Big Heart". This has come about through stability, taking opportunities and making progress.

What we are actually celebrating this weekend is over one hundred years of hunting and gathering. For one hundred and four years we have hunted for trophies on the sports field in a number of codes including Rugby, Cricket, Netball, Volleyball, Tug of War and Hockey. We have gathered trophies in all categories both locally and at national level. Take a look at the photo albums to confirm the success all codes have experienced.

We have hunted for strength and stability. We have gathered that by land and building ownership as opportunities have arisen.

Our most recent hunt has been for our club's history. Fortuitously that has been gathered by the enthusiasm and passion of born and bred club members Richard Hannay and Arthur Ball. This did not come anytime too soon. As the years pass we are losing members who are taking so much history with them. Richard and Arthur have identified and emphasise the importance of keeping and securing accurate club records.

The calibre of players and administrators we have nurtured over the years is recognition of the well organised modern club we are. It is not easy in today's world of professional sport to maintain the level of success we have learned to expect and accept at club level.

The freehold land and buildings we are enjoying today are a culmination of the ground work instigated by our forefathers one hundred and four years ago and carried forward by the players and administrators of today.

As you would expect it has not always been easy to take on projects without hardship. In fact one of the funding options during the development of this facility was to sell-off the playing fields to The Western Bay of Plenty Council. This was a serious financial consideration but against the principle of why we needed our own facilities and not be controlled by other parties. In fact a proposal sat on the table with WBOPDC for a period of time. When our current President was asked by Council when the agreement was going to be signed-off, Ashley Peat promptly answered: IT IS NOT FOR SALE.

We thank you for that Mr President.

We are extremely fortunate that we have a very experienced and smart administration team supported by many long serving dedicated sponsors. The mere fact that this club is in proud possession of its very own freehold land and buildings, is no guarantee that we will survive the next one hundred years.

Now that we clearly understand our past, we may more confidently look to the future. Our challenge is to accept change and move into the future with sincerity and confidence.

May I please propose a Toast to our Unsung Heroes and Sponsors....

In concluding, there is nothing truer than the old adage "Success Breeds Success".

May we forever be successful breeders.