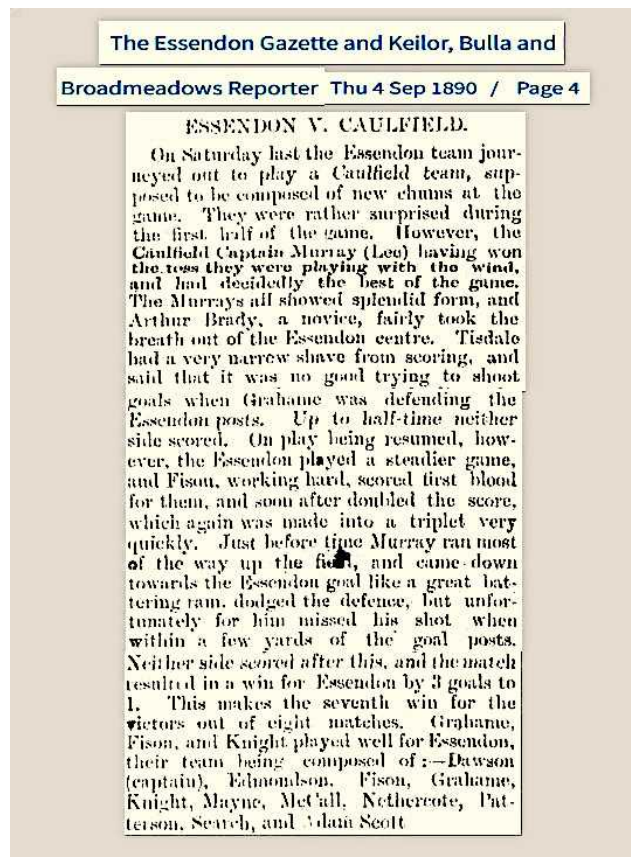


A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CAULFIELD LACROSSE CLUB

"The Australasian" of 9 May 1890 noted the formation of a lacrosse club in Caulfield. Ultimately, Melbourne Lacrosse Club would supply two office bearers, K. L. Murray and H. Graham (A test cricketer), to the Committee of the newly formed Caulfield Lacrosse Club.



So based on the above the club was formed in 1890, commencing in the VALA in 1891.



Caulfield 1891 team
Back row, third from the left is possibly Theo Handfield

On June 8, 1895, two of the VLA's leading clubs, Caulfield and South Melbourne, met in the first pennant match at the MCG. With all funds going to charity, the MCG was granted free of charge and all other VLA matches were suspended in the hope that neutral lacrosse supporters would attend. The South Melbourne Record's "Facing Off" wrote, "on such a perfect day and an even turf good lacrosse was to be expected and good lacrosse was played for never of late years has there been a better exposition of the game." However, he prefaced the description, it is regretted that the charities will not be much benefited. Had the match been well advertised and longer notice given, the proceeds might have been larger. Even members of the various clubs were ignorant till [sic] late in the week where the match was to be played and that the proceeds were to be devoted to charity. The gripping match, played before largely empty stands, was drawn, three goals apiece. Cis Murray equalised for Caulfield just three minutes from time. Its backbone was formed by the Murray brothers, Cis, Basil, Hugh and Noel.

However, in 1895 Caulfield finished fourth, University, Essendon and South having surpassed them, and for whatever reason the club did not exist in 1896, with the few remaining players, including Murray and Handfield, facilitating the formation of the M.C.C. Lacrosse Section with Dan White.

The Club first met on Saturday, May 5, 1890. There is some conjecture as to whether or not Caulfield was based at Caulfield Park, its present location, or near the racecourse at what is now Glen Huntly Park. The Club had almost immediate playing success, winning A grade premierships in 1892, 1893 and 1894. Yet by the end of the 1896 season Caulfield had disbanded, apparently due to lack of numbers. Why did such a dominant club cease to be, was it the economic conditions of the late 1890's? What we do know is that two of the leading players, Cis Murray (who had played with University LC) and Theo Handfield (who played for Caulfield LC from 1892 -1895 and served on the committee in 1895) were along with Dan White were the "Fathers" in establishing lacrosse at the MCC in 1896. Why did Murray and Handfield leave Caulfield? Was it because the numbers had dwindled to such an extent that the club could no longer field a team?

Following the cessation of Caulfield Cis Murray (who had played with several clubs prior to Caulfield) and Theo Handfield (who played for Caulfield LC from 1892 -1895 as well as served as a committee member in 1895) were two of the key individuals who helped establish the M.C.C. Lacrosse Section in 1896.



Caulfield team circa 1909

Following a hiatus of 13 years (1896-1908) the Club reformed in 1909, and has competed in the Victorian Lacrosse Association every year since, at junior and senior level at Caulfield Park. The club remained viable from that time, despite the impact of two world wars, but did not play in a state league or A grade grand final until 1941, with 15 further appearances in grand finals between 1941 and 1966.

Who was responsible for the growth and success of Caulfield Lacrosse Club?

The name that keeps coming up regarding the success from the 1940's until the 1960's was Jack Hodges, who was a senior banker with the ANZ Bank and was a member of the Hodges Real Estate family. Jack was an active recruiter at Caulfield Technical School and would run a clinic at least once a year and demonstrate lacrosse and encourage boys to come down and play, and was very successful. Jack never played lacrosse but became involved as he lived in Balaclava Road, immediately opposite the entrance to Caulfield Park. He was a very active communicator, went on the first 2 Australian overseas lacrosse tours in 1962 and 1967 and was a great communicator and very well connected. Jack was responsible for Brian Griffin and Allan Gandy coming to Caulfield, and was a very generous man, would accommodate these people when they first arrived and made sure they fitted in to the community and more importantly Caulfield! It is said that after the drought on grand final wins in 1960, Jack took the team down to Nicabelas (Station Hotel) and lined up 6 beers for every member of the team.

Jack Hodges also held a party(For a while one for each team) at his home every year which the Club looked forward to, with John Flood and Phil Humphreys following suit later and also holding parties at their homes. Fortunately there were no breathalysers in the 60's and early 70's!

Another influential person in the club was coach Cleve Weatherill, who coached Caulfield throughout the 50's and early in the 60's, as well as Australia in 1962, before relocating in the 1970's to Canberra where he served as the Secretary of the Department of Defence.

Over the journey the club has won seven A grade/Stage League premierships (1941, 1943, 1949, 1960 - 62& 1966) and started off many a youngster's sporting career. Since that last premiership victory there have only been two appearances in a state league grand final, 1971 and 2003.

For whatever reason Caulfield lost many of its former champion players to other clubs, with the likes of Denis Trainor, Don Miller, Phil Humphreys, Graeme Ross and Bill Stahmer leaving to take up coaching roles at other clubs, as well as state and national coaching roles. The urban sprawl also saw many players move to the outer suburbs and either continue playing or see their children take up the game and excel at other clubs, many relatively new clubs.

Caulfield Lacrosse Club was incorporated in 1984, and in late 1990, the Club merged with the Caulfield Women's Lacrosse Club (which had started as a separate entity in 1974 in the VWALA, tasting ultimate A grade success in 1985). This merger paid dividends for Caulfield's men's and women's lacrosse players and teams.

Lacrosse is recognised as the fastest field game played, and Caulfield has produced some of the game's finest exponents and many international players and several coaches.

Winners of the Don Hobbs Trophy (Best player at a national championship) – Rob Stark (2006) and John Tokarua (2008)

Winners of the Isaachsen Trophy (National B & F at club level) – Don Miller (1961), Chris Brown (1991) and Rob Stark (1996, 2005 & 2012)

Vince Healy Trophy (B & F Victoria) – Don Miller (1961), Ivan Bryning (1962), Chris Brown (1991), Rob Stark (1996-99, 2005, 2011-12, & joint winner 2014), Murray Keen (2003)

WOMEN

While women's lacrosse was re-introduced into Victoria in 1962 a team was not formed at Caulfield until 1973, entering the VWALA competition in 1974 with 18 players. The key people involved in establishing women's lacrosse at Caulfield were Barb Imlach, Ann Stahmer, Marion Wilmott, Jean McKenzie (Ann and Marion's mother) and Marie Weatherill with Marie's husband Peter being the first coach of the women's team.



Circa 1976

Back row: Lisa Seekamp, Pete Weatherill (Coach), Helen Imlach, Nadene Seekamp (Partly obscured), Maria Weatherill, Diane Evans, Jenny Brown, Marie Emerson, Adrienne Goldman, Lyn Jansen
Front row: Adele Seekamp, Janet Campbell, Gaelene Willis, Christine Campbell

When Caulfield women started they only wore gloves and used hickory sticks, which are clearly a lot heavier to carry and give a lot harder check. During the 70's all games were played at Royal Park with no boundaries, leaving the trees to act as a pick and games were 12 a side.

In 1984 the A grade team secured Sue Cody as coach, who managed to steer Caulfield Women to their first A grade premiership in 1985 (Pictured below).



Back row: Allison Gandy, Janet McAuliffe, Helen Imlach, Sharon Summers, Heather Bassett, Janet Campbell, Brad Temple
 Middle row: Sue Gandy, Sue Cody, Vivienne Broad, Leanne Trainor
 Front row: Nicole Lincoln

In 1986 Caulfield was honoured and extremely proud to have 3 players - Vivienne Broad, Nadene Seekamp and Heather Basset selected in the 1986 Australian women's lacrosse team, which won the World Cup final against the USA on their home turf, 10 to 7.

In 1990 the women's club merged with the men's club, with Marion Willmott being the first President of the newly merged Caulfield Lacrosse Club.

1995 saw Fiona Graham named in the Australian team for the inaugural Under 19 Women's World Championship, which was played at Bryn Mawr in Pennsylvania, where the Aussies beat the USA in the final 5 to 4, once again on their home soil.

In 1996 Caulfield won their second A Grade Fearon Cup against Newport.

In the 2000's Caulfield were lucky enough to secure Max Madonia as coach, who guided the club to 4 A Grade premierships from 2000 - 2003. In 2005 Brian Hecker coached the state league team to another A grade premiership.

In 2005 Meredith Carre, Michelle Lincoln and Sue McSolvinn were selected to represent Australia at the 2005 Women's World Cup along with Max Madonia as coach. Australia again defeated the USA in the final on their home soil 14 -7.

During this decade Ben Stevens recruited a whole junior girls team by running an after school program which was really successful.

In 2009 Caulfield celebrated their 100th anniversary with a ball which was a fantastic night for the club, where the Women's Team of the Century was named. During the period 2009-11 Caulfield was struggling with elite senior players from 2009-11 and so Caulfield oversaw an Eastside team,

which was a combination of senior elite players from Eastside Clubs (Caulfield, Malvern, Camberwell and Chadstone) to ensure a competitive fourth A grade team in the competition.

In 2011 Lacrosse Victoria held their 50th year anniversary lunch for the women of Victorian Lacrosse as a get together to celebrate our great game.

In 2013 Sue "Macca" McSolvin was selected for her 6th World Cup (Goalkeeper) and later that year she coached Caulfield's A Reserve team which took out the grand final. In 2015 Macca was honoured with an OAM for her services to lacrosse.

Due to COVID lacrosse was not played in 2020.

Since COVID, Caulfield has only been able to field combined junior and senior teams with other Eastside clubs and in 2022 the combined Chadstone and Caulfield senior team won the B grade grand final with a golden goal in overtime.



MEN'S CENTURY LACROSSE TEAM (1909-2009)

Back row (L to R) Graham Small (President 2009), Bill Stahmer, Robert Stark, John Tokarua, Glen Meredith, Rob Clayfield (Representing Jack Hodges), Mark Kindermann (Representing Max Kindermann), Chris Brown, Tom Hardy, Joy Clayfield, Doug Imlach (Representing Cleve Weatherill)

Front row: Graeme Ross, John Flood, Denis Trainor, Allan Gandy, Peter Stiglich, Brian Griffin, Anne Bryning (Representing Ivan Bryning), Don Miller & Phil Humphreys

Not present (Deceased) Alan Picton, Wally Hately & Wally Logan



WOMEN'S CENTURY LACROSSE TEAM (1909-2009)

Back row (L to R) Doug Imlach (Patron), Sue Cody, Michelle Lincoln, Felicity Porter, Lisa Seekamp, Heather Bassett, Janet McAuliffe, NadeneCann (Nee Seekamp), Jane Graham (Representing Fiona Graham), Graham Small (President 2009)

Front row: Sue McSolvin, Shirley Ploog, Leanne Trainor, Lynette Small, Max Madonia, Meredith Carre, Sue Gandy, Janet Campbell

Not present: Vivian Temple, Tanya Broom (Nee Campbell)

Winners of the Jean Matthews Perpetual Trophy (Victorian best and fairest award) from Caulfield are Lisa Seekamp (1980) Vivienne Temple (1984), Leanne Trainor (1994) and Meredith Carre (1995).

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION LIFE MEMBERSHIPS – MEN & WOMEN

George Flood, Reg Ponton Snr, Don Miller, Phil Humphreys, Ted Clayfield, Marie Weatherill, Denis Trainor, Sue Gandy, Eric Nicholls, Allan Gandy & Graeme Ross

NATIONAL LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Phil Humphreys (1993) and Don Reyment (2005) were made fellows of the Australian Lacrosse Council and Sue Gandy a life member of the Australian Women's Lacrosse Council (2001).

TODAY

The Club continues to play at the picturesque Caulfield Park and in season 2024 had 3 men's teams (44 players), 2 combined boys teams with Malvern (19), 1 combined women's team with Chadstone (11 players) and 1 combined girls team with Malvern (5 players).