

# MEMOIRS OF THE STUDLEY QUOIT CLUB

J. S. ROPER

*"Quoit" : A circular ring or piece of iron, stone or other material, to be pitched at a fixed object in play; pl. the play or game itself."*

FOR several years prior to 1858, a number of gentlemen resident in Halifax and Bedford, Nova Scotia, found recreation in the then new game of "Quoits". Two groups, one meeting at Bedford, the other at Macnab's Island, regularly played at their favorite sport. As these places were not convenient for some of them, it was thought best to secure suitable grounds nearer the city. Mr. Matthew Richardson, who at that time lived on the property in the south western part of the city known as "Studley", now the site of Dalhousie University, through his sons W. M. and J. F. Richardson offered the use of a portion of his grounds, overlooking the North-West Arm and beautifully situated among the pine trees and spruce shrubs. This offer was accepted. A meeting was held, on August 24, 1858, at which the following gentlemen were present; S. W. DeBlois, John Chearnley, Robert DuFort, B. G. Gray, W. H. Creighton, L. I. Norton, J. F. Richardson, Wm. Twining, John H. Macnab, Henry Piers, T. E. DesBarres, R. Harding Stewart, Charles H. Shiel and Matthew Richardson. "The Studley Quoit Club" was there organized.

In 1881 Miss Antoinette Nordbeck purchased the Studley property, but permitted the Club to continue its play, and it has played there ever since. In consideration of this generous permission, the Club voted the sum of twenty dollars to the Infants' Home, an institution of which Miss Nordbeck was the founder. Mr. Samuel W. DeBlois, having been elected President, and Mr. William Twining, Secretary, the above named gentlemen (fourteen in number) constituted the charter members. The game of quoits became very popular, and the club flourished. Men of social standing from both the business and military life of the city took the places of those dropping out. The membership was limited to 14 until 1873.

At the annual meeting in 1863, Mr. W. H. Creighton was elected President. This caused a split in the membership, with the result that a number resigned and formed a Club in Dartmouth which flourished for a number of years, but disbanded later, when

several who seceded rejoined Studley. In 1873 the membership was increased to 30, and the grounds were then extended to 3 rinks. Play became lively, and competition very keen.

Mr. J. W. Wylde was elected President in 1875, and he held that office until 1898. He was very popular with the members, held them together and fostered a spirit of *camaraderie* that has done much to make the Club so widely and well known. Mr. Wylde was always referred to as the "Boss" of the Club, owing largely to the fact that he had the members so well trained and did his work in such a genial and friendly way. He was one of the most enthusiastic pitchers, and was many times champion. Shortly after the announcement of Mr. Wylde's retirement, a special meeting of the Club was held on December 17th, 1898, at the Halifax Hotel. At this gathering he presented the Club with a Sterling Silver Punch Bowl (which is still in use) under the stipulation:—

That the Punch Bowl be held by the Studley Quoit Club in perpetuity whilst holding together as an organization, and that it be held in trust by three members, viz: Jos. R. Henderson, Rev. E. P. Crawford and John A. Albro, who failing these conditions of which they (the trustees) shall be sole judges, they are to withdraw the Bowl, and hold the same subject to the donor's order, or order of his agent.

After the presentation, refreshments were served; according to record, speeches followed, the "feast of reason" and the "flow of soul" were unbounded, and a song (composed by the "Boss" himself) was sung with great gusto. In July, 1899, a grand reception and luncheon on the "grounds" was held in honour of Mr. Wylde, and he was presented with an address and testimonial, showing in a substantial manner the esteem in which he was held by every member of the Club. He left Halifax shortly afterwards to reside in England.

From 1888 to 1891 the late King George V, then Prince George, Captain of *H. M. S. Thrush*, was a frequent visitor, as was also Prince Louis of Battenburg during his stay here.

At the annual meeting in May, 1899, Dr. Edward Farrell was elected President. The doctor was a great favorite with the members, and filled this office with ability and tact until his death in 1901.

In May 1901, Mr. Joseph Henderson was elected President. The genial and courteous "Joe", as chief of the Studley warriors, kept the boys in good order, and looked after their interests generally. He was one of the best pitchers, handling the discs with such dexterity that it was hard to wrest the championship from him.

The Club was very fortunate in having Mr. J. E. Albro as Secretary for a great many years. Mr. Albro always took a very great interest in its affairs, and kept complete records which were stored in vaults at the Dennis Building; but these were destroyed when that building was burned in January, 1912.

At the organization of the Club the membership was limited to 14. This was raised to 30 in 1873, and in 1879 it was raised again to 40 playing and 20 non-playing. In 1893 the playing membership was increased to 50, and in 1895 the non-playing was raised to 30. In 1896 the playing membership was increased to 60, and the non-playing to 40, as it now stands.

Club colours, Blue, Silver and Gold, were chosen in 1901.

A number of very valuable trophies of various designs have been at different times presented for either competition or Club use. On August 7th., 1873, the Club held a Hodge Podge on its grounds in honour of His Excellency the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, who was then on an official visit to Halifax as Governor-General of Canada. His Excellency, in replying to the President's toast, signified his intention of presenting a Silver Medal for annual competition. This was received in due course. At that time there were three other Quoit Clubs in Halifax, the "Cosmos", "Halifax", and "Chebucto", each having some excellent players. The Studley Quoit Club "to show sporting spirit" suggested to His Excellency that, if he were willing, it would prefer having the Medal competed for by the four Clubs. To this His Excellency willingly assented; so the four met on the "Cosmos" grounds. After a long hard fight, the Studelyites were victorious, and carried off the coveted prize to their own particular wigwam.

This "Dufferin Medal Competition" represents the championship of the Club, and has been competed for each year since 1873.

In August 1883, Capt. Harold Cummings of the Royal West Kent Regiment (at that time stationed in Egypt) sent to President Wyld a cheque for £20, to be devoted to forwarding the interests of the Club; a handsome Silver Challenge Cup was purchased in London with this money, and has been in annual competition since then. Capt. Cummings was a most enthusiastic member during the five years he was in this garrison, ranking with the best pitchers. He always took a prominent part in the activities of the Club, and was a good fellow and a good sport. The resolution in part on the records, thanking Capt. Cummings for the gift, is

That it be filled to the brim with our ever flowing brew.  
The cup to be in perpetual memorial of his munificence, as well as of his enthusiastic interest in the welfare of the Club.

On August 30th., 1894, the Club entertained His Excellency the Earl of Aberdeen, presenting him with a set of Quoits. Shortly after His Excellency's return to Ottawa, he sent a Silver Medal to be competed for annually; this competition was held for several years. In 1898 it was decided that the winner in that year was to become the owner, thus closing the competition. Dr. James Ross was the winner.

Robert Dalglish of Montreal, who was entertained on several occasions by the Club, presented a silver jug, which was won by the late A. A. MacKay, K.C., who generously returned it for annual competition—the member winning it twice to become owner. L. R. Kaye carried it off.

To relieve the monotony, after the presentation of the Dufferin Medal, Col. H. DeS. Isaacson, R.A., in a thoughtful moment had an enormous polished mahogany spoon made, beautifully mounted in sterling silver, for presentation to the competitor scoring the largest number of inches. This trophy has been won by various members; indeed some have carried it off twice, others will have opportunities of winning it and holding it for one year.

A challenge cup was presented to the Club by two Americans, B. F. Bell and Louis Satlier Bruguiere, in 1900, which was won by G. Harry MacKenzie. The cup is made of "Tobin Bronze".

Two silver loving cups were presented to the Club, one by Vice Admiral Commerel, V.C., the other by Lieut. General Montgomery Moore. Two silver ladles were given. One was presented by Lady Erskine in person on the grounds, being the gift of Vice-Admiral Sir James E. Erskine, K.C.B.; the other by John M. Bowers of New York. On this occasion the Club was presented with the large white Naval Ensign, which it still flies. The desk was given by Alex Stephen, being a handsome addition to the Club furniture.

In 1919 the Prince of Wales, now Edward VIII, was initiated into the mysteries of the Club, and the photograph of that initiation is known throughout the world as the "Smiling Prince". It is one of its most valued possessions.

Studley Quoit Club has always been one of the most outstanding organizations in the Club life of Halifax. It has entertained every distinguished personage visiting the city, and has had enrolled among its members men who have been prominent in the political, financial, banking and commercial life of the Province and Dominion. X

The Club has had a number of outstanding quoit pitchers other than those above mentioned, some of those being, J. W. Gor-

ham, Hon. A. G. Jones, Mr. Justice Longley, Hon. W. S. Fielding, C. H. Potts, L. R. Kaye, Prof. Howard Murray, James Hall, H. McF. Hall, and Rev. N. LeMoine.

Studley Quoit grounds is a place where "good fellows get together" to enjoy in the open air the exercise of quoit pitching, mingled with reasonable social entertainment. It is one of the archives of Nova Scotia.

## NOTE

## STUDLEY QUOIT CLUB PRESIDENTS

1858—1863	- - - - -	Samuel W. DeBlois.
1863—1875	- - - - -	Lt.-Col. W. H. Creighton.
1875—1879	- - - - -	Lt.-Col. J. T. Wylde.
1879—1901	- - - - -	Edward Farrell, M.D.
1901—1906	- - - - -	J. H. Henderson.
1906—1917	- - - - -	Prof. H. Murray.
1917—1929	- - - - -	C. E. W. Dodwell, M.E.I.C.
1929—1932	- - - - -	H. E. Pyke.
1932—1935	- - - - -	R. T. MacIreith, K.C.
1935	- - - - -	J. S. Roper, K.C.