Footscray Trugo Club Pavillion and Grounds
139 Buckley Street, Seddon

Conservation Analysis

Prepared for
The City of Maribyrnong

July 2006

This Conservation Analysis has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter adopted by ICOMOS Australia

**This document has been completed by
David Wixted and Simon Reeves**

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ILLUSTRATIONS & DRAWINGS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Significance of Site

Collectively, the site is of historical and social significance:

- *For important associations with an idiosyncratic local pastime that is one of very few contenders for the title of a unique Australian sport that was entirely devised (as opposed to simply adapted) by Australians;*

- *For associations with one of the oldest Trugo clubs still in existence, founded only a few weeks after the original club at Yarraville (which, in contrast to Footscray, no longer occupies its original premises);*

- *As the only surviving example of an entirely purpose-built Trugo clubhouse that lobbied for, partly funded, constructed and maintained by the club members themselves;*

- *As an important social focus for successive generations of retirees in Footscray and environs;*

- *For its ability to demonstrate, through its simple form and humble materials, the close-knit social aspect of the game of Trugo, providing evidence of the enthusiasm and collective input of club members to see a home provided for their sport.*

Works to the site

The buildings require a number of maintenance repairs along capital works funding to bring the buildings up to an appropriate standard of amenity.

These works will be discussed in the extended version of this document which would then form the Management Plan for the site. At this stage only the historical analysis has been completed and further funding will allow completion of the management and works issues.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background, Brief and Methodology

The distinctive game of Trugo traces has a strong historic connection with the western suburbs, as it developed at the Newport railway workshops prior to 1927, when informal games are believed to have commenced at Yarraville, which, in turn, prompted the establishment of formal Trugo clubs at Yarraville and Footscray in 1937, and thence elsewhere.   None of the sites associated with Trugo have been ever identified in municipal heritage studies, and it was not until early 2005 that the City of Maribyrnong sought heritage advice in regard to the club premises in Fehon Street, Yarraville. A brief report was prepared by the heritage adviser, which provided a brief historical summary (based on limited secondary sources) and a comparative analysis of some other clubs around Melbourne. It was duly recommended, however, that a more extensive study be undertaken in order to document the history of the game more fully, and to firmly establish the heritage significance of the surviving sites associated with it.

The Trugo pavilion in Yarraville was subsequently demolished, but the City of Maribyrnong then commissioned the present study in order to document the broader history and significance of Trugo in the context of the pavilion and green at Buckley Street, Footscray, which is the only other Trugo-related site in that municipality.

This heritage assessment is essentially the first part of a broader approach to this site. The building requires repair works and a second stage of funding is recommended to allow completion of a Management Plan which will outline the approach to be taken with those repairs.

This heritage assessment makes it clear that the Footscray pavilion and rinks are the oldest surviving in the metropolitan area and the City of Maribyrnong should take steps to include the site within the Heritage Overlay of the Planning Scheme.

No paint controls or tree controls would need apply.

1.2   Study Team

The study team who prepared this report comprised:

> David Wixted, conservation architect and principal

> Simon Reeves, architectural historian

1.3   Copyright

Copyright is held by the City of Maribyrnong and *heritage ALLIANCE* June 2006.

1.4   Acknowledgements

The study team would like to thank the following people for contributing to the information presented in this report:

Mr Michael Guiney   *Railway historian*

Ms Jane Carolan   *Historian*

Mrs Ethel Waters   *Footscray Historical Society*

Mrs Nancy Brandon   *Grand-daughter of Tom Grieves, inventor of Trugo*

2.0 CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

2.1 The Origins of Trugo

2.1.1 The Newport Railway Workshops

As is the case with many popular sports and games, the origins of Trugo are mysterious and largely undocumented, with many varied and sometimes conflicting explanations that have clearly been passed down over several generations of players. Virtually all published accounts trace the origin of the sport back to the Newport railway workshops in the 1920s. A typical version of the off-told story is as follows:

> During the Great Depression, workers at the Newport railway workshops needed a diversion from the iron horse. At lunch time they would use wooden mallets to hit rubber rings, taken from railway carriage buffers, through goal posts spaced about 1.7 metres apart. As legend has it, on one occasion when a ring was hit between the posts someone called out "that was a true go". From that moment the game of Trugo was formed and flippant attempts at fun soon evolved into a serious sport, with clubs formed an a competition established[1]

Here, a slightly different account provides some additional information:

> Some time back in the 1920s, workers at the Newport rail yards, on their lunch break one day, started knocking about a few rubber buffer washers (used in the carriage couplings) with their sledgehammers. Before long, some bright spark had set up two cans as goal posts and the first "ring" was set careening through the goals to the resounding cry of "that was a true go".[2]

However, it is the following version – which appeared in the *Age* newspaper in 1984 – that not only represents one of the earliest published accounts of the origins of Trugo, but also one of the most detailed.

> Trugo, seemingly a distant relative of croquet, was the product of the bored mind of Mr Tom Grieves, a Newport workshops worker in 1927. Mr Grieves' job was to replace the old rubber rings on the buffers between rail carriages – and he noticed that that as he threw the used ones away they would roll quite a long way… Mr Grieves took a few rings to his Yarraville home one day and convinced his sons that it would be amusing to hit them about the street with sticks. Older neighbours thought it looked like fun and joined in and soon Mr Grieves had introduced the game to the Newport workshops where it became the lunchtime sport. Workmen were so thankful to Mr Grieves that they named the game Tru-go, after his initials T.G.[3]

In any case, the connection with the railway yards was to play a significant part in codifying the sport itself. The size of a Trugo court was defined by the size of a typical railway carriage of the time – 90 feet (27 metres) long – while the width of the goals – 5 feet, 9 inches (1.7 metres) – echoed that of the standard railway gauge. [4] Moreover, the number of shots permitted for each player was initially set at four, corresponding to the number of rubber rings to each carriage.

2.1.2 Tom Grieves, Father of Trugo

Until now, very little was known of Tom Grieves, the so-called 'father of Trugo'. Thomas Henry Grieves, son of Charles Grieves and Frances Rutledge, was born c.1866 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, County Durham, where he was later employed on the railways.[5] Grieves married one Margaret Hope (1870-1956), with whom he had nine children: George Robinson (1888-1956), Francis, Sarah, Mary, Nancy, Walter Herbert (c.1901-64), Charles William (c.1906-73), Elizabeth (later Mrs J H Howard) and Gladys (later Mrs G A Lilley).[6] The entire family migrated to Australia and had settled in Melbourne by 1914, when directories first included an entry for Thomas H Grieves, at Collingwood Road, Newport. For the next two years, Grieves was listed as the proprietor of a smallgoods shop at nearby 64 Wilkins Street. Then, from 1916 until 1928, the family lived at 52 Nelson Road, Newport, and later at 17 Hughes Street, Yarraville, until Grieves' death in 1949 at the age of 83 years.

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1   'Doin' doughnuts till they die', *Essendon Gazette*, 21 October 1996, p 9.
2   'Trugo, the fair-dinkum game of champions', *Age*, 19 December 2001.
3   'Fair dinkum sport set to make world debut', *Age*, 11 August 1984, p 5.
4   'Keeping track of a true game', *Times*, 30 September 2003, p 2.
5   Information provided by Mrs Nancy Brandon, grand-daughter of Tom Grieves, 26 May 2006.
6   See Charles Grieves' death notice in 'Deaths', *Sun*, 17 February 1973.

The assertion that Tom Grieves was employed at the Newport railway yards to replace the rubber rings on the carriage buffers is as yet unverified. Curiously, his name does not appear in the lists of full-time employees of the Victorian Railways department, which were published triennially in the *Victorian Government Gazette* in the early twentieth century.[7] It has, however, been suggested that he may have been a supernumerary employee, whose names were not recorded in that source.[8] Electoral rolls identify his occupation, somewhat unhelpfully, as a 'skilled labourer'. His grand-daughter, Mrs Nancy Brandon, maintains that Grieves was indeed employed by Victorian Railways 'for years', and may have been involved in the manufacture of equipment or components at Newport. She remembers him as quiet but clever man with a particular fondness for inventing things, including a rabbit-trap for which he apparently applied for a patent. According to family folklore, Grieves also developed a device while still employed with the railways in England – 'something to do with the railway gauges', his grand-daughter recalls – which later enjoyed widespread use, albeit after Grieves had already left for Australia.[9]

2.13 Early games at Yarraville

The circumstances that saw Trugo develop from a lunchtime diversion at the Newport railway workshops into a full-fledged local sport are equally ill-documented. It apparently took place in the mid-1920s, with some sources giving the date as 1925 and others as 1927.[10] According to one version of the story, it simply came about as a consequence of the retirement of Tom Grieves himself:

> When he retired he took some of the discs to the Yarraville Gardens and hit them about with a croquet mallet. He put up a couple of goal posts and, from a distance, tried to shoot the discs between them… Other senior citizens became interested and the Yarraville and Footscray Trugo Clubs were formed.[11]

While this account skips over a period of at least a decade – as the two clubs mentioned would not be formed until 1937 – it otherwise accords with the purported chronology of the game's development. Born in c.1866, Tom Grieves would have reached the age of sixty in 1925 or 1926, which was then the compulsory age for retirement amongst employees of the Victorian Railways.[12] Moreover, it was also around the same time that Grieves moved to Yarraville – presumably coincident with his retirement – after living in Newport since he arrived in Australia in c.1913.

Although one published account states that Trugo was originally played at the Footscray Football Ground (then known as the Western Oval or Western Reserve; now the Whitten Oval), others generally concede that these early games took place 'at the foot of the Yarraville Gardens'.[13] Informal matches were certainly taking place there by the early 1930s, as we have an eyewitness account from Eric Pooley, who, some five decades later, took up the game himself and served as secretary of the Victorian Trugo Association in the mid-1980s. According to Pooley, who was born in 1919:

> As a teenager walking through the Yarraville Gardens, coming from Seddon to my job at the Sugar Works on afternoon shift, I observed these elderly men hitting a rubber ring through goal sticks. I recall Mr Claus Ebeling, a local engineering industrialist, Mr Tom Grieves (the inventor of Trugo) and other men I knew of.[14]

Claus Ebeling evidently became involved in Trugo because he was Tom Grieves' best friend, as the latter's grand-daughter recalls.[15] According to another early account of the sport's history, Ebeling was one of four prominent local businessmen who pioneered Trugo in Yarraville – the others being general storekeeper Harry Wood, tobacconist Ben Williams and wine and spirit merchant J W Haslem. All four were highly-regarded and well-respected local entrepreneurs, particularly active in their community and with varied interests:

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7   A search of those lists for 1918, 1921, 1924 and 1926 has not revealed any entry for Thomas Henry Grieves.
8   This was suggested to the authors by Michael Guiney, railway historian.
9   Information provided by Mrs Nancy Brandon, grand-daughter of Tom Grieves, 20 July 2006.
10   See eg 'Trugo display', *Mail*, 29 March 2000, p 2; 'Keeping track of a true game', *Times*, 30 September 2003, p 2;
11   'Trugo began in Yarraville', *Footscray125th Anniversary Book*. p 56.
12   Information provided by Michael Guiney, railway historian, 22 June 2006. The retirement age was only lifted to 65 in 1948.
13   'Trugo: A sport with origins in the Newport rail yards', *The Mail-Advertiser*, 11 March 1987, p 42.
14   'Introduction', in *Over Fifty years of Trugo*, p 3.
15   Information provided by Mrs Nancy Brandon, grand-daughter of Tom Grieves, 20 July 2006.

Figure 1   *One of the earliest published illustrations of a game of Trugo, showing Claus Ebeling and friends at Yarraville (source:* Herald, *11 February 1938)*

Claus Ebeling (1859-1948) was founder of the prominent engineering firm of C Ebeling & Sons Pty Ltd, which he developed from a simple blacksmith's forge in 1885. Ebeling was active in his local community over the course of several decades, with a lengthy obituary noting that he was 'a man of varied interest, a member of several Masonic lodges, one of the founders of Trugo, a keen rifle shot in his youth, a bowler and a cricketer'.[16]

Harry Percival Woods (1885-1952) took over his mother's drapery store and, as his obituary later noted, 'with his inherent enthusiasm and business acumen, revitalised the business and developed "Woods of Yarraville" into the flourishing establishment that it is today'.[17] Once described as 'Yarraville's Number One Citizen', Woods was an active sportsman in his youth and, in later years, held many administrative positions in local sporting clubs.   While his lengthy obituary makes no mention of his role in the development of Trugo, it states that he served variously as secretary, treasurer, vice-president and president of the Yarraville Cricket Club, vice-president of the Yarraville Football Club and president of the Yarraville Tennis Club.

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16   'Obituary: Mr Charles Ebeling', *Footscray Advertiser*, 27 August 1948, p 9.
17   'Obituary: Mr Harry P Woods', *Footscray Advertiser*, 28 May 1952.

Joseph Whitten Haslem (1874-1935) was a local shopkeeper who had commenced business in Yarraville in 1905, when he purchased an existing wine and spirit shop on the corner of Lennox and Stephen streets. As his obituary later noted, 'progressing rapidly with sound business methods, he later moved to the corner of Ballarat and Anderson streets and, twelve months ago [ie 1934] he equipped a modern grocery, wine and spirit store in Anderson Street'.[18] Haslem's obituary makes no mention of his connection with Trugo, but did state that he was 'closely associated with public and sporting movements'.[19] It was duly noted that he was a one-time president of the Yarraville Tennis Club, the Footscray District Tennis Association and the Yarraville Cricket Club, and, as a trustee, was instrumental in the acquisition of the Yarraville Oval.[20]

Benjamin Williams, a hairdresser and tobacconist who operated a shop at 39-41 Anderson Street.

Each of these five Trugo pioneers offered sponsorship of some kind to the fledgling sport. According to one source, Grieves and Haslem provided trophies for the early matches, while Woods donated a monetary prize and Williams, in conjunction with Haslem, supplied tobacco and beverages for refreshments.[21]

2.2   The First Trugo Clubs

2.2.1   Yarraville Trugo Club

It was not until 1937 that the casual Trugo players of Yarraville finally formalised themselves into the Yarraville Trugo Club. This was officially launched in January of that year with ten members that included Tom Grieves, the sport's inventor, as foundation president. Two other early players, Harry Woods and Claus Ebeling, were also amongst the original club members, although Benjamin Williams was apparently not, while J W Haslem had died two years earlier. The secretary of the new club was one William Thomas Piggott who, on 13 February that year, made the following formal request to the Footscray City Council:

> I have been instructed to write and ask your permission for old retired men of Yarraville to play a game called True-go in the Yarraville Gardens. It is a Yarraville man's invention and they are all old rate-payers of Footscray. The game consists of four goal-posts, two at each end, 22 yards from one end to the other and 2 yards apart at each end. The goal-posts are 18 inches high and stand on the grass. A croquet hammer and rubber rings are used.[22]

The council promptly replied that permission was granted 'as convenient anywhere and at any time'. A series of tournaments were then organised by the new club, which, within only two months of its formation, had doubled its membership. Commencing on Friday, 12 March 1937, five teams of four players competed for trophies donated by local businessmen, including one from local butcher Jack Howard, Tom Grieves' son-in-law. This was won by Charles Dunn, later described in the press as the only player to ever score a "possible" (ie perfect score of 24) since the game was introduced.[23] A week later, a second tournament (with trophy donated by Harry Woods) saw the No 5 Team win, followed by a 'keenly contested' encounter between players Owen Madigan and William Laing, who tied four times before Laing triumphed on his fifth attempt.[24]

Such was Trugo's popularity during this early phase that membership of the Yarraville club increased exponentially. The original ten members had not merely doubled by mid-March, but doubled again, to forty, by mid-April. This boom was partly due to council support I, with the local newspaper noting that the club had 'good champions in the Mayor and councillors, who are helping in every way to advance the game'.[25] Yet the sport was still played only in Yarraville, with the members of a single club competing against themselves. After the second tournament on 19 March, club president Tom Grieves stated that he was 'keen to get the game going in other suburbs, so as to create more competition'.[26]

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18   'Death of Mr J W Haslem', *Footscray Advertiser*, 16 November 1935, p 1.
19   'Big circle of friends pay last respects', *Footscray Advertiser*, 23 November 1935, p 23.
20   'Death of Mr J W Haslem', *Footscray Advertiser*, 16 November 1935, p 1.
21   'Trugo: A sport with origins in the Newport rail yards', *The Mail-Advertiser*, 11 March 1987, p 42.
22   Letter, W T Piggot to Town Clerk, City of Footscray, 13 February 1937. VPRS 9291/P1 (City of Footscray General Correspondence files), Unit 117, File 37/289. Public Record Office.
23   'True-go club popular', *Footscray Advertiser*, 13 March 1937, p 9.
24   'True-go club competition', *Footscray Advertiser*, 25 March 1937, p 3.
25   'True-go club popular', *Footscray Advertiser*, 13 March 1937, p 9.
26   'True-go club competition', *Footscray Advertiser*, 25 March 1937, p 3.

2.2.2   Footscray Trugo Club

It was only a few weeks after the formation of the Yarraville club that Tom Grieves' wish came to fruition, when the *Footscray Advertiser* reported that:

> Footscray is joining with Yarraville to learn the game and then intend to form a club of their own. It is hoped that other suburbs will follow suit, as the game is a great one for old retired men and keeps them in good fettle.[27]

In early May, it was reported that a new Trugo club was to be formed at Footscray, with 'about forty' members of its own. The only condition of membership, apparently, was that players must be aged sixty years or over. The club's original executive officers were retired boilermaker Walter Coy (1870-1953) as club president, moulder George Darlington Miller (born 1870) as secretary ,and carpenter William Peter Lins (1867-1943) as treasurer. While early membership records have evidently not survived, write-ups in the local newspaper identify numerous club members in the first half of 1937 including Peter Miller, Andrew Kleesh, John Haynes, Jeremiah Moloney, T McGowan, J Munton and L Thomas. Significantly, several of these men –including Lins, Haynes and Moloney – are known to have been railway employees, and may have even played Trugo at Newport in the 1920s.[28]

The new club initially approached the local council with a view to making the Western Oval (now the Whitten Oval) available for its matches. Permission was duly granted, and the Mayor himself 'hit the first ball' at the club's official launch at the oval on Friday, 14 May 1937. This event was also attended by members of the soon-to-be rival Yarraville Trugo Club, who 'expressed pleasure that the novelty was going to give enjoyment, not only to Footscray residents of mature years, but to those in other suburbs as well'.[29] The new club held its first proper tournament a few weeks later, pitting two teams that had been selected by the president and the secretary. The so-called Secretary's Team, which included top-scorers Munton, Haynes and Miller, won by eight points.

The first inter-club Trugo competition, between Footscray and Yarraville, was held on Friday, 18 June, at the Western Oval. Despite their 'home ground' advantage, Footscray were defeated by seven points. As the local newspaper explained it:

> [The] Footscray team played a good game considering the club has only been in existence four weeks and its members have had little opportunity for practice owing to the dampness of the ground, while Yarraville were able to practice on the asphalt of an old tennis course. Very friendly feeling exists between the club. A large number of visitors were also present.[30]

2.2.3   Other Trugo Clubs to 1940

According to one account, Trugo initially spread to other suburbs due to the encouragement of the four Yarraville businessmen who had pioneered the sport in the early 1930s.[31] The same week that a new club was launched at Footscray, the local newspaper reported that a recent match at Yarraville had been attended by a resident of Williamstown who was interested in forming another club there.[32] This came to fruition within a year, as there is a record in June 1938 of a 'friendly game' between Williamstown and Footscray at the Western Reserve.[33] Three months later, all three clubs then in existence met for a so-called 'triangular match' at the same venue.[34] Early the following year, a fourth team had emerged under the name West Footscray, which included some players formerly associated with the original Footscray Club.[35] This may or may not have been connected with the split that saw the members of the Footscray club split into two discrete teams – designated as Footscray 1 and Footscray 2 – which are first recorded in 1940. Around the same time, the Yarraville club was similarly divided into Yarraville 1 and Yarraville 2.

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27   'Yarraville True-go Club', *Footscray Advertiser*, 17 April 1937, p 22.
28   See Moloney's obituary, *Footscray Advertiser*, 15 November 1941, p 9, in which he is described as 'a railway man for 45 years'.
29   'True-go expanding: Footscray Club officially open', *Footscray Advertiser*, 15 May 1937, p 2.
30   'True-go club: first inter-club Match', *Footscray Advertiser*, 19 June 1937, p 15.
31   'Trugo: A sport with origins in the Newport rail yards', *The Mail-Advertiser*, 11 March 1987, p 42.
32   'Yarraville's Competition', *Footscray Advertiser*, 15 May 1937, p 2.
33   'Footscray True-go Club', *Footscray Advertiser*, 23 July 1938, p 2.
34   'Footscray True-go Club', *Footscray Advertiser*, 27 October 1938, p 22.
35   'Footscray True-go Club', *Footscray Advertiser*, 21 January 1939, p 23.

It was also during 1939 that the first ladies' Trugo club was established by a group of housewives at Yarraville. The original members – including the spouses of several members of the men's team – comprised Mrs Bolan (president), Mrs Lloyd (vice-president), Mrs Wilde (treasurer), Mrs Piggott (secretary), Mrs Dawson (captain), Mrs Ditchburn (vice-captain), Mesdames McDonald, Wade, Stead, Tangey and Miss Carney (committee members). As the local newspaper reported:

> There is no age limit, and Yarraville womenfolk are invited to become members. Practice is held at Hanmer Reserve every afternoon except Sunday, and shortly a challenge to the men's club will be issued.[36]

The inaugural Battle of the Sexes took place a few weeks later, in May 1939, which saw the men of Yarraville triumph with a score of 149 to 80. It was duly noted, however, that 'the ladies entertained the gents at afternoon tea and a very enjoyable afternoon was spent'.[37] By the end of that year, yet another new Trugo club had emerged – this time at Newport, the birthplace of the sport.[38]

2.3   The Footscray Trugo Club Premises

2.2.2   The Search for a Site

When the Footscray Trugo Club approached the council in regard to using the Western Oval for its matches, it was noted that 'a permanent site in Hyde Street has been suggested'.[39] A later report clarified that this was next scout hall, and would be developed with a pavilion and six Trugo rinks – 'three solid surface for the winter and three grass for the summer'.[40] Plans for this scheme, which formed part of a broader redevelopment of the Town Hall approach, were prepared by the City Curator, David Matthews. It was noted, however, that implementation was 'contingent upon costs – an estimate of which is being prepared'. After receiving a quote for £66 'plus labour', the Gardens Committee ruled the project too costly, and 'decided not to take any action until alternative schemes were considered'. One councillor suggested that 'something might be done at the Railway Reserve' – an ironic suggestion given the origins of the game.[41] Nevertheless, the club was 'temporarily' accommodated at the Western Oval for some time. After winning a match against Yarraville in July, it was noted that Footscray, 'who are handicapped through having no court to play one, hope to be accommodated shortly'.[42]

Meanwhile, the council followed up its earlier suggestion that railway land might available. In September 1937, the Town Clerk wrote to the Victorian Railways commissioners, requesting the lease of 'that strip of the Railway land along Irving Street, south side, between the Footscray Station and the Hopkins Street Bridge as a general improvement scheme'.[43] Their request was promptly denied, although the council persevered, and, five months thence, made a second request – this time for the use of only a small portion of the railway land, located between an electrical substation and a woodyard. The council stated that 'it is proposed to use the land for the purposes of a True-go playground for elderly people (pensioners)'.[44] Their letter was accompanied by a sketch plan, dated only a few days earlier, that depicted the proposed complex: an area measuring 150 feet by 80 feet that contained no less than eight Trugo rinks – four grass and four asphalt – with a pavilion on the railway line side.[45] The commissioners expressed some concern that the land was already leased 'for grazing purposes', and that it also had some underground high-tension cables running through it. In any case, the scheme was subsequently abandoned only a few weeks later, when council stated its intention to provide six Trugo rinks on an entirely different site, bounded by Buckley, Windsor and Cuthbert streets.[46]

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36   'Yarraville ladies form True-go club', *Footscray Advertiser*, 6 April 1939, p 21.
37   'True-go matches', *Footscray Advertiser*, 20 May 1939, p 19.
38   'Footscray True-go Club Christmas party', *Footscray Advertiser*, 6 January 1940, p 9.
39   'Footscray True-go Club to be formed', *Footscray Advertiser*, 8 May 1937,
40   'Six True-go rinks proposed', *Footscray Advertiser*, 5 June 1937, p 3.
41   'Rinks for Trugo Club considered too costly', *Footscray Advertiser*, 19 June 1937, p 15.
42   'True-go challenge won by Footscray', *Footscray Advertiser*, 10 July 1937, p 22.
43   Letter, Town Clerk to Secretary of Victorian Railways, 28 September 1937. File 1937/11589, Unit 609, VPRS 421/P0 (Victorian Railways, Secretary's Inward Registered Correspondence), Public Record Office (hereafter PRO).
44   Letter, Town Clerk to Secretary of Victorian Railways, 7 February 1938. *Ibid*.
45   'Suggested site for True-go rinks on land under the control of Victorian Railways Commissioners', dated 3 February 1938. *Ibid.*
46   'New True-go rinks', *Footscray Advertiser*, 26 February 1938, p 10.
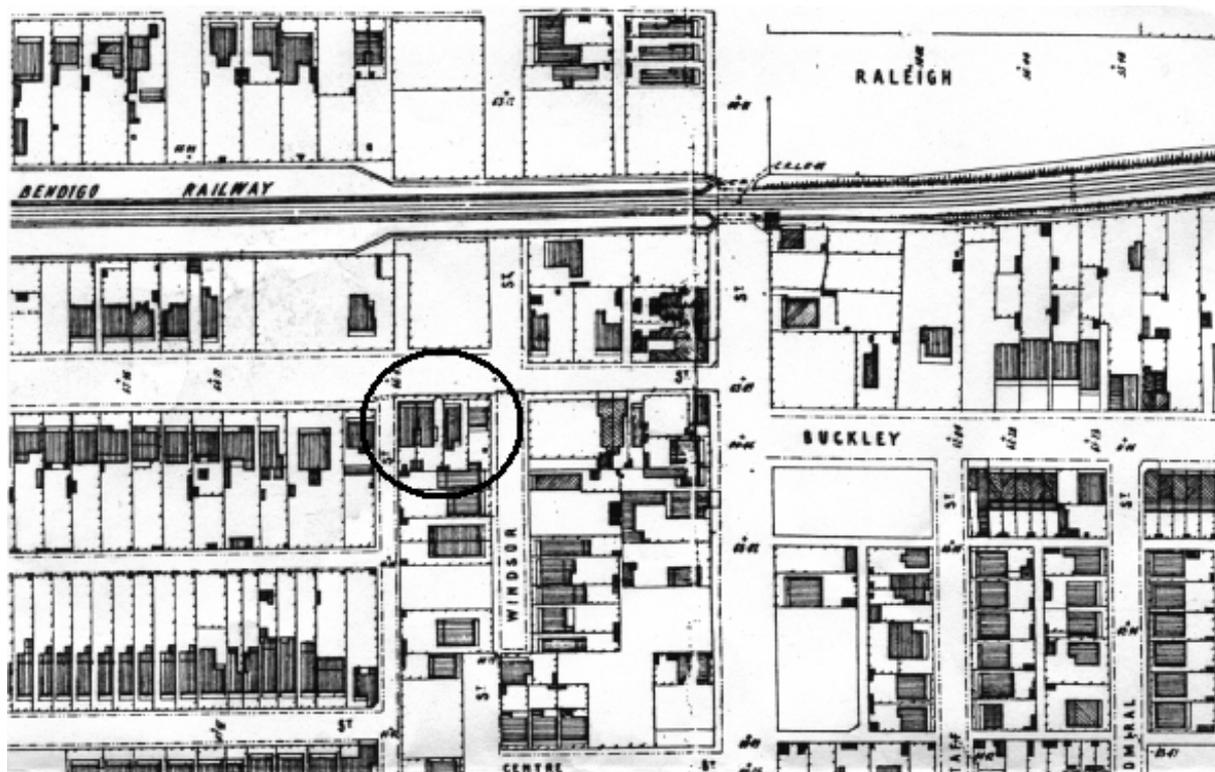
*Figure 2   MMBW map (c.1900) showing proposed site of the Footscray Trugo green, still occupied by four houses
(source: Map Collection, Education Resource Centre, University of Melbourne)*

2.2.3   The Buckley Street Site

The proposed site of the new 'Trugo rinks' was on the south side of Buckley Street, opposite Middle Footscray railway station. The block between Windsor and Cuthbert streets, which had been vacant for two decades, formerly comprised four residential allotments, each occupied by a small timber dwelling. These are shown on an MMBW plan from c.1907 as three single-fronted cottages (latterly designated as Nos 145 to 149) with long rectangular plans and a double-fronted villa on a square plan (No 143). Directories confirm that the first three houses dated back to the late nineteenth century, while the last (on the Windsor Street corner) was first recorded in 1906. The houses were occupied by a succession of working-class tenants over the next few decades. The most enduring occupant was one Peter Miller, a labourer, who lived at No 143 for over twenty years.[47]

In 1923, all of the houses on the south side of Buckley Street – between Victoria and Cuthbert streets – were compulsorily acquired and subsequently demolished by the City of Footscray so that traffic circulation could be improved at the Victoria Street intersection.[48] The additional land allowed Buckley Street to be widened between Windsor and Victoria streets, with a new slip lane at the latter corner. The four allotments between Victoria and Cuthbert streets, however, did not actually form part of this initial phase of road-works, and subsequently remained vacant.   Peter Miller –formerly long-term occupant of the house at No 143 – had relocated to a nearby house at 47 Windsor Street, from where, no doubt, he observed the vacant land where his house had once stood. It was presumably this Peter Miller – a member of the Footscray Trugo Club, and, no less, the younger brother of its founding secretary, George Miller – who suggested the site for the new rinks. Not entirely coincidentally, Miller's friend and neighbour at No 40 Windsor Street, was one John Thomas Haynes – who happened to be the Trugo club's vice president.

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47   *Sands & McDougall Directory*, various.
48   The City of Footscray's Register of General Correspondence includes a reference to a letter that Peter Miller wrote to council on
      28 February 1923 in regard to the proposed widening of Buckley Street. The actual letter, however, is missing from the file.

2.24 The New Grounds (1938) and Pavilion (1940-42)

A sketch plan for the proposed 'True-go rinks' [*sic*] was prepared by council in February 1938. This envisaged a row of five rinks – three grass and two asphalt – running parallel to Buckley Street. Annotations to the plan indicated that cost of the project would be £81, including fencing, water, grass seed, soil, hose and seats but excluding the asphalt rinks, which would incur a further £29. Finances, however, were limited. Club members proposed to form a working bee to assist in the project – a gesture, as the local newspaper reported, 'which the council has received with appreciation'. [49] In March 1938, club secretary G D Miller made a further offer:

> I am requested . . . to sincerely thank the council for having decided to prepare a ground for the club and to make an offer of £20 to the Council towards the cost of the pavilion. We are in a position to pay £10 at once and will be pleased to pay the other £10 within twelve months.[50]

At a council meeting two months later, it was resolved that the grass links would soon be provided, although 'the question of constructing a shelter, with sewerage, has been referred to next year's estimates'.[51] No further action appears to have been made by the council and, almost one year later, new club secretary Whitty made the following heartfelt plea:

> The club is prepared to stand by its promise of £20 towards whatever the expense will be. At present we play on the Western Reserve but as football will be starting soon we will only have four days a week in which to play, as the schoolboys often play on the Wednesday. Hoping your council can see its way to do something for the old pioneers of Footscray.[52]

The rinks were eventually laid out, and the pavilion – a small weatherboard structure in the south-east corner of the site – was completed. However, it was not until February 1940 that the local newspaper reported that the 'Footscray True-go Club will officially open its new ground and pavilion in Buckley Street next Monday'.[53] The council had proposed to charge the club a token fee of one shilling per year, provided that they maintained the green themselves – for which purpose a councillor had offered to donate a lawn-mower. This notion was rejected and, instead, the council accepted the club's offer to contribute a nominal 30/- per years for the upkeep of the new facility, on the basis that 'most of the players were old age pensioners'.
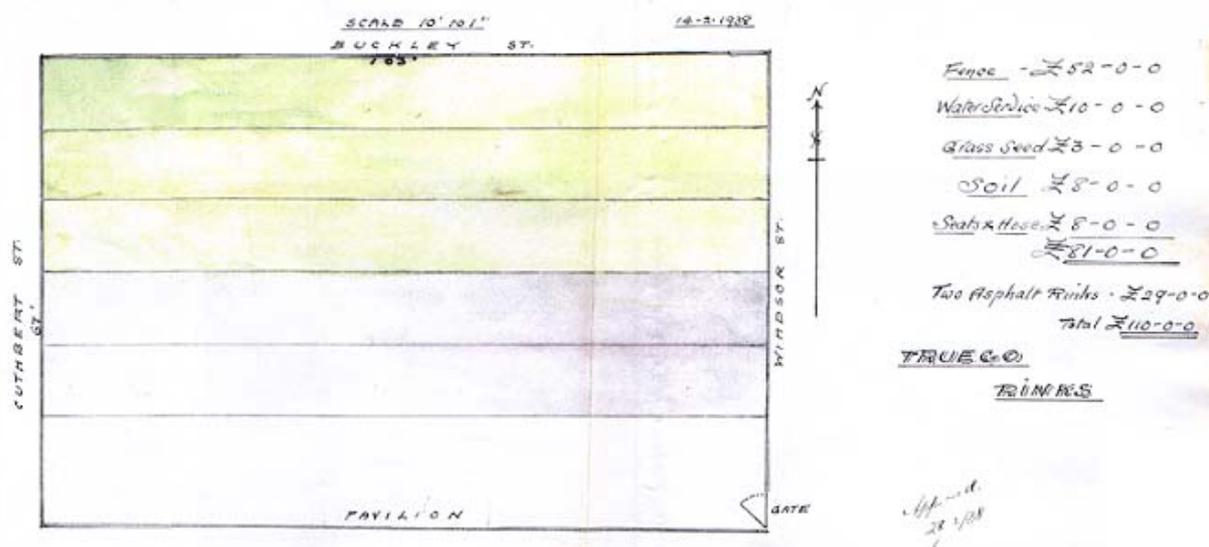
*Figure 3   The Footscray City Council's original proposal for the Trugo club premises in Buckley Street (1938)
(Source: File Misc/1, Unit 128, VPRS 8291/P2, Public Record Office)*

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49   'New True-go rinks', *Footscray Advertiser*, 26 February 1938, p 10.
50   Letter, G D Miller to Town Clerk, 16 March 1938. VPRS 8291/P1, PRO.
51   'True-go club asks for tract', *Footscray Advertiser*, 25 May 1938, p 16.
52   Letter, A Whitty to 'Mayors and Councillors, 13 April 1939. VPRS 8291/P1, PRO.
53   'New playground for aged men: official opening', *Footscray Advertiser*, 10 February 1940, p 3.

Figure 4   The Footscray Trugo Club premises as it appeared in the mid-to-late 1940s.
Note the original enclosed pavilion at the eastern end (1940) with the open shed (added in 1942) alongside
(Source: www.picturevictoria.vic.gov.au/site/maribyrnong/miscellaneous/4798.html)

Council correspondence indicates that further extensions were made to the Trugo pavilion during the early 1940s.[54] In November 1941, the club made a request to council for the addition of an open shelter. Once again, there were delays in securing funding and materials, and it was not until April 1942 that, at a meeting of the council's Gardens Committee, one of the councillors finally 'advocated the erection of a shelter for the Footscray True-Go [*sic*] Club'.[55] It was stated that certain members of the club were prepared to undertake the work themselves, with one councillor duly noting that 75% of the new building for the rival club at Yarraville had been undertaken by the members themselves. Council correspondence reveals that some timber was provided for the new shelter at Footscray in April, and some materials for ceiling lining in August. The new shelter was officially opened in December 1942.

At a council meeting in late 1949, it was noted that 'the enlargement of the Footscray Trugo Club's room in Buckley Street was agreed upon at the request of Councillor McNab'.[56] This presumably involved the infilling and partial rebuilding of the former shelter to create the fully enclosed clubroom that is evident today. The building was further extended during 1965, when, as the local newspaper reported, 'the Footscray council has given the sport a boost by . . .installing facilities for women's Trugo at Footscray'. This, presumably, alluded to the construction of the small extension at the western end of the clubhouse, containing female toilets.[57]

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54   There are numerous references to True-go clubs in the City of Footscray's *Register of General Correspondence* for the period 1940-42, which is held by the Public Record Office. The actual correspondence files, however, are incomplete, and the files that contain the Trugo-related correspondence are amongst those that are missing from the PRO holdings.
55   'Card Pavilion for Tru-goers', *Footscray Advertiser*, 4 April 1942, p 7.
56   'Secondhand materials only for space pavilion', *Footscray Advertiser*, 2 December 1949, p 10.
57   'Trugo cup to Yarraville', *Footscray Advertiser*, 27 October 1965, p 41.

2.4   The Spread of Trugo from 1940

Trugo within Victoria

There were seven discrete Trugo teams in Melbourne by the start of 1940 – three at Yarraville (including the women's club), two at Footscray, and one each at Williamstown and Newport. In August 1941, a second all-female team, the Footscray Ladies' Trugo Club, was proposed.[58] This was to be based at the Trugo rinks at Hanmer Reserve, latterly vacated by the Yarraville men's team had moved to new premises in Beaton Reserve that year. Another new men's club, at Carlton, had been formed by January 1942. It was at that time that the *Footscray Advertiser* reported an upcoming pennant competition to be held under the auspices of the Victorian Trugo Association – one of the first published references to that body.[59] This pennant became known as the Con Curtain Trophy after the man who presented it – Cornelius John "Con" Curtain (1904-1955), a local publican who, at the time, had just become president of the Footscray Football Club.[60] The Trugo pennant that bore his name remained an important part of the VTA fixture during Curtain's presidency[61] – which, incidentally, ended dramatically in 1946 when Curtain became the first president in club history to be defeated at election. He left the club with some acrimony, joining a rival club and riposting with "I'll never set foot in the Footscray Football Ground again'.[62] The VTA, meanwhile, had initiated another trophy competition, the Nelson Cup, during 1942.

Otherwise, there were few changes to Trugo until 1949, when the second Yarraville team withdrew from competition and a new club, at Moonee Ponds, was admitted.[63] Yarraville 2 was re-instated early the next year, along with another entirely new club, South Melbourne.[64] The next few years saw two more new clubs: a second one at Moonee Ponds (c.1953), taking its name from its home ground in Queen's Park, and another at Port Melbourne (c.1954), based in Edwards Park. However, the most significant change to the game of Trugo during the 1950s was the increased popularity of the 'tunnelling' stance, which had begun to supplant the traditional 'side-swiping' stance as the preferred position for male players.[65]

*Figure 5   A group of Trugo players at the Champion Fours tournament at Yarraville in 1965
(source:* Footscray Advertiser*, 3 November 1965, p 3)*

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58   'Ladies want Trugo', *Footscray Advertiser*, 23 August 1941, p 2.
59   'Trugo pennant games for Con Curtain Trophy', *Footscray Advertiser*, 24 January 1942, p 7.
60   'Sudden death of Mr Con Curtain', *Footscray Advertiser*, 21 January 1955, p 8.
61   See eg 'Trugo results', *Footscray Advertiser*, 22 June 1946.
62   John Lack et al, *A History of the Footscray Football Club*, p 154.
63   'Trugo', *Footscray Advertiser*, 21 January 1949, p 15.
64   'Trugo', *Footscray Advertiser*, 10 December 1949, p 15.
65   'Trugo, a fair dinkum game of champions', *Age*, 19 December 2001.

From the early 1960s, Trugo became even more popular, with the emergence of several new clubs in the northern suburbs – Preston (c.1960), Coburg (c.1961) and Brunswick (c.1962) – plus others as far afield as Sandridge (1963) and Prahran (c.1965). During that time, attempts were also made to establish more Trugo clubs in the outer west, including at Sunshine and Altona, but these were not successful.[66] By the mid-1960s, there were no less than fourteen teams in the VTA.[67] While the men's premiership competitions had been dominated by the western suburbs clubs during the 1940s, the next two decades saw the newer teams emerge as potent forces in the game. After winning the pennant in 1951, the Footscray Trugo Club would not be premiers again for over thirty years.[68] Yarraville were the victors in 1960 and 1968, but the intervening premierships were dominated by the newer northern suburbs clubs of Moonee Ponds, Preston and Brunswick.[69] During the 1970s, however, Yarraville re-emerged as the champions, winning the men's premiership four times between 1974 and 1977 and then again in 1979, 1981 and 1982.[70]

Trugo underwent something of a resurgence in popularity during the 1980s and '90s. A new trophy competition was launched in 1981, where all teams in the Footscray and Yarraville areas competed for the Rupert Bassett Shield.[71] The eponymous Bassett (1909-72) was a city councillor and one-time Mayor (1956) of the City of Footscray, who had maintained a long interest in the game of Trugo and presented many of the medals and trophies during the 1960s. The inaugural Rupert Bassett Shield was won by the Yarraville club, which went on retain the shield, entirely unopposed, for the next eleven years.[72] The shield was finally snatched by Footscray in 1993. The same club had previously broken its premiership drought in 1984, when it took the pennant for the first time since 1951.[73] Along with the Rupert Bassett Shield, another regular trophy is the Jimmy Drew Shield, which is awarded to the player with the highest individual average.[74] This trophy was named after Jim Drew (born c.1903), former president of the Victorian Trugo Association.

Another high point for Trugo during the 1980s was the announcement that a grant of $1,000 would be made available by Victoria's 150th Anniversary Board.[75] This partly funded a well-publicised Trugo demonstration in March 1984, which formed part of the sesquicentenary celebrations. Trugo was subsequently chosen as the demonstration sport for the inaugural Australia Games, held in Melbourne in 1985, because it was 'indigenous and little-known'.[76]

By the mid-1980s, there were no less than twelve Trugo teams in the VTA, comprising a total of 300 regular players.[77] While a few clubs had fallen by the wayside since the 1960s – including those at Newport, Carlton and Williamstown – there were also several new additions to the ladder. Yet another Yarraville team, dubbed the Eagles, was founded in c.1984, winning its first premiership in 1989.[78] The next decade saw more new clubs formed at Newlands and Reservoir, although the long-established club at Queen's Park also became defunct during that time. The Footscray Trugo Club also established a second team – for ladies – in March 1998. This was formed after two West Footscray women attended a Trugo demonstration in South Melbourne and, taking an immediate liking to the game, were subsequently approached to form a new team at Footscray.[79] But perhaps the most significant change to Trugo during this period was the lowering of the minimum age for players, which was set at 60 years in 1937 and remained thus for the next five decades. The VTA later initially lowered the limit to 55 and then, by the mid-1990s, had abandoned it altogether so that players of any age could compete.

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66   'Meeting to form Sunshine Trugo Club', *Footscray Advertiser*, 4 August 1964, p 26.
67   'Trugo clubs do well in leagues', *Footscray Advertiser*, 15 September 1965, p 75.
68   'Trugo title win', *Footscray Mail,* 11 April 1984, p 14.
69   *Over Fifty Years of Trugo*, p 9.
70   *Over Fifty Years of Trugo*, p 9.
71   'Trugo champ', *Western Times*, 17 August 1994, p 45.
72   'Trugo champ', *Western Times*, 17 August 1994, p 45.
73   'Trugo title win', *Footscray Mail,* 11 April 1984, p 14.
74   'Trugo, the fair dinkum game of champions', *Age*, 19 December 2001.
75   'Trugo title win', *Mail*, 11 April 1984, p 14.
76   'Fair dinkum sport set to make world debut', *Age*, 11 August 1984, p 5.
77   *Over Fifty Years of Trugo*, p 21. C f 'Fair dinkum sport set to make world debut', *Age*, 11 August 1984, p 5.
78   'Tru-go is alive and well', *Western Times*, 27 March 1991, p 45.
79   'Saturday set', *Footscray Mail*, 20 October 1999, p 114.

By the end of the 1999 season, there were still twelve teams in the men's competition, comprising (in ladder order) Port Melbourne, Brunswick City, Brunswick, Sandridge, Reservoir, Preston, Footscray, Yarraville, Ascot Vale, South Melbourne, Yarraville Eagles and Prahran. Several clubs, however, were subsequently dropped from the competition. The Newlands/Coburg team, which had participated in the 1999 season, had ceased by the start of 2000.[80] During that same year, the club at Prahran became defunct after its green in the Grattan Gardens was annexed as part of the site for the City of Stonnington's new $3 million community centre. Finally, the Reservoir Trugo Club – a relative newcomer to the sport – ceased at the end of the 2004-2005 season.[81]

Despite – or because of – the decreasing membership of many clubs, Trugo has been subject to particularly widespread publicity since the mid-1990s. In October 1996, the sport was showcased at the ninth annual Western Region Games, where separate men's and women's tournaments were held over three days and gold, silver and bronze medals awarded to the victors.[82] A Trugo exhibition was held at the Yarraville club's premises in March 2000 as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival for that year, which had the theme of 'Our Sporting History'.[83] A year later, a 'budding Footscray film-maker and sometime Trugo player' by the name of John Weldon sought to produce a half-hour documentary about the sport, for which he had received some funding from Film Victoria.[84] Not long afterwards, Trugo became the subject of a short film, *The Don of Trugo*, which told the story of former Footscray Trugo Club president, Jack Donovan.[85] The film, written and directed by Maidstone resident David Pritchard, premiered at Sun Theatre on 23 October 2003 as part of the annual Yarraville Festival. Even more recently, Trugo was profiled on Channel Nine's lifestyle program, *Getaway*, in 2005. Andrew MacMillan, captain of the Footscray team, was interviewed by presenter David Reyne just before a match against the Yarraville Eagles at the latter's home ground in Beaton Reserve.[86]

Trugo Outside Victoria

As early as 1940, attempts were made to introduce the sport outside Victoria. Early that year, Harry Kemp of the Footscray Trugo Club had visited Western Australia – where he had once lived for twenty years – and provided sets of rules and other information about Trugo to several local organisations, including the Fremantle Workers' Social & Leisure Club, the Fremantle Lumper's Union, and the Claremont Old Men's Home.[87] It has not been established, however, if the sport was ever actually taken up by any of them. By 1984, there was one Trugo club outside Victoria – located at Bankstown in New South Wales.[88] A newspaper report in 1991 noted only that 'the sport is slowly filtering into parts of New South Wales', without providing further details.[89]

International Trugo

The year 2003 saw a bold attempt to introduce the sport overseas, after a Dutch man, Pieter Post, saw a Trugo match whilst visiting a friend in Footscray. Such was his enthusiasm that he purchased mallets and rubber rings to take home to Amsterdam, stating that 'It's got great potential. Everyone in Europe will love it – they adore games played in a park'.[90] Post further stated that he intended to have a Dutch team organised by the middle of August, with an international challenge to be issued to Australia a month later month. True to Post's word, the inaugural international match took place on 18 September 2003 as part of the so-called Cardboard Sky Festival in the Dutch town of Biezenmortel.[91] With the help of a live webcam link, the two teams duly competed, commencing respectively at midnight (Dutch time) and 8:00am (Melbourne time).

80   'Stylish last win', *Footscray Mail*, 1 March 2000, p 124.
81   'Footscray makes a getaway to TV big time', *Mail*, 9 March 2005, p 127.
82   'Having a trugo', *Western Times*, 9 October 1996, p 13.
83   'Trugo display', *Mail*, 29 March 2000, p 2.
84   'A testing time for tru goers', *Mail;* 6 November 2002, p 125.
85   'Trugo film to light up festival', *Mail*, 15 October 2003, p 9.
86   'Footscray makes a getaway to TV big time', *Mail*, 9 March 2005, p 127.
87   'True-go introduced to Western Australia', *Footscray Advertiser*, 30 March 1940, p 8.
88   'Fair dinkum sport to make world debut', *Age*, 11 August.
89   'Tru-go is alive and well', *Western Times*, 27 March 1991, p 45.
90   'A dose of Dutch courage', *Mail*, 5 March 2003, p 132.
91   'Trugo...een Australisch spoorwegspel', <www.cardboardsky.nl/erick/images/traditie.html>. We are enormously grateful to Mr Jon James for translating this webpage from the original Dutch.

3.0 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

3.1 The Building

Exterior

The Trugo clubhouse is a single-storeyed weatherboard building on an elongated rectangular plan, with a hipped roof of corrugated galvanised steel. Its simple form belies several discrete phases of construction, whereby the original small pavilion (at the east end of the site) was extended by the addition of a long open shelter, which, in turn, was subsequently infilled, and new toilets added at the west end. Today, the building can be interpreted as a single elongated building (containing the clubroom, kitchenette and storeroom) with a smaller addition at the west (containing the toilets) that has a separate roof hip with a lower ridge line.

The elevations to the east (facing Cuthbert Street) and the south (to the property line) are entirely windowless. The principal elevation, to the north, has irregular fenestration that further reflects the multi-stage construction of the building. At the extreme east end, a pair of timber-framed double hung sash windows remain as evidence of the original 1940 pavilion. To the right, the portion of the façade that corresponds to the 1942 shelter addition (subsequently rebuilt and infilled in 1949-50) contains a double doorway and a wider timber-framed window, with a central pair of multi-paned sashes flanked by louvred windows. At the west end of the main building are two doorways with ledged timber doors and timber thresholds, which provide access, respectively, to the main clubroom and the storeroom.

On the principal façade, the toilet addition has a small recessed porch that provides access to the mens' facilities. On the west side, it has a pair of small windows with timber architraves and glass louvres,opening into the women's WC. To the south, the wall is set back from the property line to permit access to the female toilets though a narrow doorway.

Also along the northern frontage of the clubroom, there is a pair of timber flagpoles at the eastern end – attached to the building by steel brackets – and several concrete-framed timber benches.
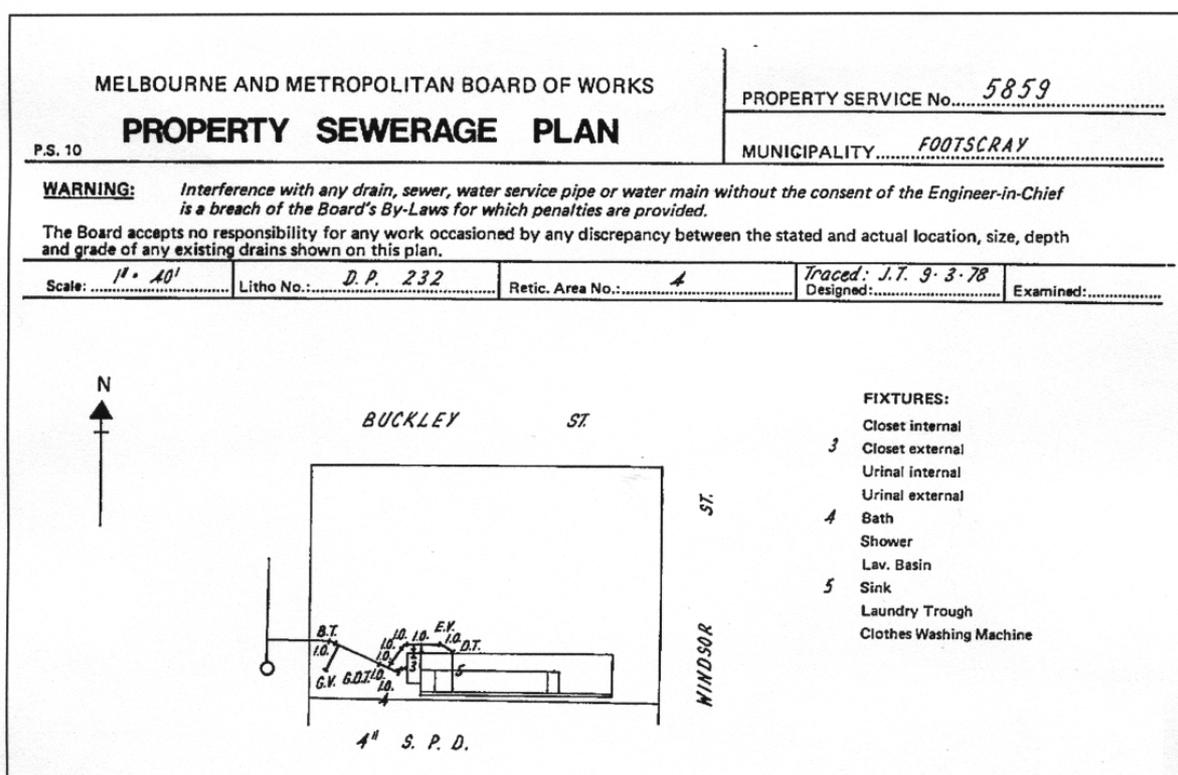

Figure 6   Detail of Property Service Plan No 5859, showing the extent of the site and the location of the pavilion, 1978. (Source: City West Water)

Figure 7   General view of the Footscray Trugo Club pavilion, looking south from Buckley Street

Figure 8   Detail of original 1940 pavilion; note double-hung windows and flagpoles

Figure 9   Detail of the 1942 'card pavilion', which was subsequently rebuilt and infilled in 1949-50.

Figure 10   Detail of pavilion, showing women's toilet facilities at the western end, added in 1965..

Interior

Main Clubroom

Internally, the main portion of the clubhouse is an elongated rectangular space with its windows and doors along only one side. Its internal finishes are rudimentary, indicative not only of its Wartime construction and limited budget, but also of the fact that it was largely built by volunteer labour and the members themselves. Walls and ceilings are lined with a strapped building board (possibly Caneite) and there are matching timber strap cornices to all sides but the south, which has an exposed timber beam along the cornice line. There is an unpainted timber skirting, which is apparently not original, and bullnosed timber architraves to windows and doors. The window themselves take two forms: there is a pair of timber-framed double-hung sashes at the eastern end (a remnant of the original part of the pavilion) and a wider multi-paned window with louvred sashes (which dates from the c.1950s infill of the original shelter).

At the western end of the clubroom is a kitchenette fitout, which presumably dates from the rebuilding and infilling of the former 'card shelter' in 1949-50. It includes a simple timber cupboard containing a stainless steel sink (bearing the manufacturer's brand MYTTON'S SUVA SINK UNIT) with a contemporaneous chrome tap and a blue marbled laminate splashback. Extending alongside is a red laminate benchtop. The floor has linoleum tiles.

The room contains numerous stackable chairs in a ubiquitous mid-century design, comprising a metal frame with sheet-metal backs, lined with cushioned vinyl. According to a small disc on the underside, these chairs represent

design No 1355 of Sebel's (Australia) Ltd of 96 Canterbury Road, Blackburn. There are also a number of contemporaneous folding tables of elongated rectangular form, with steel-pipe legs and timber-framed Masonite tops with a laminate finish.

Also of interest within the main clubroom are two small timber honour boards, which are thus inscribed the names and top scores of past club members:

Footscray Trugo Club	
1955	
G Pearl	*24*
J Sayers	*22*
G Gledden	*22*
C Anderson	*22*
W Minnett	*21*
A Neale	*21*
G Brown	*20*
J Bennet	*20*
	172

Footscray Trugo Club	
1958	
C Rown	*22*
A Neal	*22*
W Minett	*22*
J Young	*21*
B Downs	*23*
J Hay	*23*
L Anderson	*22*
J Fisher	*24*
	179

Storeroom

The storeroom, to the west of the kitchen, is a small windowless space. It has a ceiling of unpainted Masonite and timber floor with vintage (cardboard-backed) linoleum. The four walls are different in articulation, demonstrating the somewhat *ad hoc* nature of the construction of the space. The south wall is lined with unpainted cement sheeting, while the east wall is unlined, exposing the timber stud frame and the underside of the Masonite lining of the adjacent kitchenette. The west wall, conversely, is clad with weatherboard – evidently the original external wall of the adjacent toilet block.

The storeroom contains rough timber shelving, mounting hooks, and a wall-mounted rack for the Trugo mallets. There are also two timber cupboards – one of some vintage, with moulded drawers and grooved cupboard doors.

Toilets

The male toilets comprise a single WC cubicle accessed from the small recessed porch, while the female toilets comprise a WC cubicle and a separate airlock alongside, accessed from the rear. All of these spaces are similar in their finishes. They have asbestos cement sheeting to walls and ceilings, with timber cover straps and quadrant mouldings at the corner junctions, and concrete slab floors with a painted finish. The airlock to the women's WC has bullnosed timber skirtings and architraves, a small window and a wall-mounted hand-basin of enamelled steel.

3.2   The Rinks

The Trugo rinks take the form of an open grassed area between the pavilion and the street. There is no longer any obvious articulation of the three separate rinks that were indicated on the original site plan of 1938, nor is

there any evidence of the two asphalt rinks that were proposed at that time (but, perhaps, never actually constructed).

The rinks are enclosed on three sides by a tall Cyclone wire fence along the property lines to the north (Buckley Street), west (Cuthbert Street) and east (Windsor Street) sides. This fence has a conventional frame of galvanised metal pipe rails and posts, the latter surmounted by distinctive orb-like finials.

4.0   ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1   Historical and Social Significance

4.1.1   A Uniquely Australian Sport?

Most published accounts of the game of Trugo draw attention to the unique qualities of the game, invariably citing it as one of the few sports that are of entirely Australian origin. In such reports, Trugo has been variously described as 'one of the West's last truly home-grown sports'[92] 'one of Australia's few native sports', [93] and 'a unique game that really only Melbourne has seen'[94] Some have even asserted that Trugo is 'the only game wholly invented and codified by Australians in Australia'[95] or, put simply, 'the only true Aussie sport'[96]

As a unique Australian sport, an obvious comparison can – and often has – been drawn between Trugo and Australian Rules football. The latter's pre-eminent status as *the* Australian sport is evidenced by the fact that, like many distinctive national pastimes, it has been showcased as the demonstration sport at an Olympic games (Melbourne, 1956). However, there is some dispute if Australian Rules can be considered as uniquely Australian in derivation, as its precise origins are unclear and subject to much speculation and conflicting explanation. It is generally accepted that the sport was an adaptation of either Gaelic football or English Rugby, although an alternative viewpoint suggests that it was derived from a traditional Koori ball game known as *Marn grook*.[97] Jim Drew, a one-time president of the Victorian Trugo Association, was amongst those who concede to the former explanation. He asserted that, given that Australian Rules football is 'just a derivation of Gaelic football', Trugo remains as a far worthier candidate for the title of the 'only true Australian sport'.[98]

Jim Drew, however, qualified his claim by citing 'the possible exception of boomerang throwing'. [99] In contrast to Australian Rules football, this is indisputably of Koori origin. However, while the actual use of the boomerang goes back tens of thousands of years in this country, its adoption as a competition sport is of relatively recent origin. Indeed, it was only in September 1969 that the Boomerang Association of Australia was founded in Melbourne, with its inaugural National Boomerang Championship being held two years later.[100] Since then, the sport has flourished to encapsulate local, state, national and even international competitions, with a World Boomerang Championship being held – at various cities around the globe – every two years.

A less-well known local adaptation of a football code, but, ironically, one that has had more success overseas, is Touch Football. Essentially a version of Rugby League without kicking or body contact, it began in Sydney in the 1950s and '60s as a training technique for Rugby players. However, it soon emerged as a sport in its own right, with the first official game held in 1968 after the formation of the South Sydney Touch Football Association.[101] By 1972, when the NSW Touch Football Association was formed, there were six affiliated teams in Sydney's inner suburbs, and 1,500 registered players. A demonstration match took place at the 1976 Rugby League Grand Final, and formal inter-district competitions commenced two years.[102] The game quickly spread interstate, leading to the inaugural National Championship in 1980. It has since been introduced to New Zealand, South Africa, Asia, Pacific Islands and elsewhere, with regular international competitions being held since the 1980s, including a World Cup every four years. The sport now has 250,000 registered players in Australia and, with its low-impact and no-contact basis, retains a broad appeal that has seen it become popular with school children, women and the over-50s.

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92   'Go on, give it a true go', *Times*, 15 August 2001, p 2.
93   'Keeping track of a true game', *Times*, 30 September 2003, p 2.
94   'Go on, give it a true go', *Times*, 15 August 2001, p 2.
95   'Trugo, the fair dinkum game of champions', *Age*, 19 December 2001.
96   'Fair dinkum sport set to make world debut', *Age,* 11 August 1984.
97   The principal source for this claim is Jim Poulter, *Marn Grook - the original Aussie Rules*, 1993.
98   'Fair dinkum sport to make world debut', *Age*, 11 August 1984.
99   'Fair dinkum sport to make world debut', *Age*, 11 August 1984.
100   'Boomerang Association of Australia', <www.boomerang.org.au>
101   'History', *Touch Football Australia*, <www.austouch.com.au/index.php?id=185>
102   'History of Touch Football', *VicTouch*, <www.victouch.com.au/whatistouch.html#history>

Also of Australian origin is the ball game known as *Sphairee*, a miniature version of tennis that was invented in the early 1960s by Frederick Arthur George Beck (1919-1994), a linguistics professor from Sydney. Unlike some other contenders for the title of the unique Australian sport, its history is well-documented – not least of all by the inventor himself, who described its origins in his 1981 book, *The Game of Sphairee*:

> In the early part of 1961 I chalked out a rectangle some 20 feet by 9 feet on the rear concrete patio of my home in Amalfi Place, Longueville, and divided it down the centre with a single line from end to end so as to produce a miniature paddle tennis court. An improvised net was stretched across the middle and some old and disused paddle bats were resuscitated from their dusty resting place to play and unaccustomed part in this now historic experiment, which was to extend, with the aid of various assistants - mainly neighbourhood children - for some months.[103]

Beck had codified the game by September of that year, when he and three friends participated in the first formal game at his home-made court in Longueville. He subsequently demonstrated the game at the University Branch office of the NSW Department of Education, and members of that body later participated in the first Sphairee tournament, held on 19 December 1961. This resulted, three days later, in the formation of the Sphairee Association of New South Wales. The next year saw the installation of numerous Sphairee courts in private residences around Sydney, with some even provided for workers on the Snowy Mountains scheme. Further demonstrations were held over the next year or so, and the first State Titles were mounted in late 1963. As Beck noted in his book, 'the growth of the game has been continuous if unspectacular'.[104] It had been introduced to numerous Australian schools by the mid-1970s, and, although its popularity flagged during the 1980s, a number of school still include it in their sporting curriculum.[105]

One more 'Australian' sport that has experienced localised popularity though the education system is competitive Callisthenics. The activity known as Callisthenics – a hybrid of sport and art that combines gymnastics, dancing, singing and marching – is ultimately derived from the long tradition of Physical Culture and eurhythmic exercise. Although practiced in many parts of the world since the nineteenth century, its adaptation as a competition sport represents an entirely Australian innovation. This can be traced back to 1903, when the Royal South Street Society, a prominent Ballarat recreational organisation, introduced Callisthenics as an event in its annual Eisteddfod. The activity was subsequently introduced to state schools in Victoria in the 1930s, and it then spread interstate to South Australia, Western Australia (where its became popular after demonstrations were held at the 1956 Royal Perth Show) [106] and Canberra (where classes commenced at Belconnen in the mid-1960s).[107] Today, there are about 300 clubs across Australia, although the sport remains most popular in its native Victoria (where regular competitions are still held at the Royal South Street Society in Ballarat) and in South Australia.

 Conclusion

The foregoing analysis reveals that there are a perhaps surprising number of sports that can claim to be uniquely Australian in origin. Some of these have become widespread and ubiquitous, others less well-known but still popular within a certain demographic group, and still others remain localised and somewhat obscure. Trugo has some elements in common with all of them. Played almost exclusively by retirees, Trugo is a niche sport that is thus comparable to Touch football (also popular with older players), Sphairee (now played almost exclusively by schoolchildren) and competitive Callistehnics (played only by girls). Like Australian Rules football, Trugo has been a demonstration sport at a formalised sporting competition – the inaugural Australia Games in 1985. Like boomerang throwing or the extinct Koori game of *Marn grook*, Trugo represented a unique and entirely Australian development that was not consciously derived from an existing sport.

There are two aspects of Trugo that set is apart from the other examples discussed here. Firstly, the sport has remained uniquely and steadfastly localised over many decades, spreading through Melbourne's inner suburbs

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103   F A Beck, *The Game of* Sphairee, p 44.
104   F A Beck, *The Game of* Sphairee, p 51.
105   'Australian-invented sports', *The Sports Factor,* ABC Radio National, 25 September 1998. Transcript available at
        <www.ausport.gov.au/fulltext/1998/sportsf/sf980925.htm>
106   'The History and Introduction of Calisthenics in WA', <www.calisthenicscawa.asn.au/background/graphics/background.jpg>
107   'History of Callisthenics', <www.calisthenicsact.com.au>

but making virtually no impact anywhere else. Secondly, Trugo – in stark contrast to Australian Rules, Touch Football, Sphairee and competitive calisthenics – was not simply a local adaptation of an existing sport.   While it may bear some superficial resemblance to lawn bowls and croquet, Trugo was not consciously derived from either of them. Rather, the accounts of its origins in the Newport railway yards suggest that the sport sprang *sui generis* from an improvised lunchtime pastime.

In this sense, the sport of Trugo should be seen in the tradition of those *ad hoc* games and pastimes that tend to be improvised and then played by small localised groups – such as children in a particular family group or at a particular school, or employees in a particular place of work. These types of games are typically short-lived, are seldom codified or documented, and rarely develop into full fledged competition sports. This tradition is ably illustrated by the following example – a ball game known as *Abu Simbel* that was invented by the British comedian Peter Cook while he and some friends were staying at a remote hotel in Egypt. As the group spent a leisurely afternoon by the swimming pool, Cook began rolling a beach ball along the edge of the pool towards the hoop formed by the steel-framed pool steps. Then, to the amusement of those present, he proceeded to improvise a new sport – complete with an ingenious scoring system and its own made-up nomenclature. As eyewitness Stephen Fry later described it:

> Peter wandered slowly around the pool, a beach-ball in each hand. He noticed that the two beach-balls were each of a size that just allowed them to pass through a hoop of the steps without touching the sides. He wandered down to the south-east corner and bowled the ball up the paving-stones. It passed through the hoop, glancing off to the left-hand upright.
>
> 'Hm,' he said, to no one in particular, ' a rufford'.
>
> 'What was that?'
>
> 'If it touches the side before passing through', said Peter, 'it's a rufford. Two points'.
>
> He bowled the second ball. It struck the right-hand *and* left-hand uprights, wobbled back and forth and came to rest between them, without passing through to the other side.
>
> 'Tsh,' said Peter, ' walking down to collect the two balls. 'Strottled.'
>
> 'Strottled?'
>
> 'A Strottle between the uprights. One point'.
>
> 'So how many if it goes through without touching the sides?'
>
> 'A clean Abu Simbel?' He seemed surprised that we had to ask. 'Five for an Abu Simbel. And a trote, of course, is minus two'
>
> 'What's a trote?'
>
> Peter bowled the ball towards the hoop. It veered to the left and, before reaching the target, splashed into the pool.
>
> 'A trote,' said Peter. 'Minus two. *And* retrieval duty.'
>
> 'So how do you win?'
>
> Peter raised his eyebrows. 'Each team member has two strives per hazard'.
>
> 'Whoah, whoah whoah! Two whats per what?'
>
> 'Two bowls per go. The first team to reach twenty points wins'.
>
> And those more or les, were the rules.[108]

The group spent the rest of the day playing Cook's invented game, which soon attracted other hotel guests, prompting a series of 'International test matches' and then a challenge to the hotel staff themselves – who duly won. The following day, upon leaving the hotel, Stephen Fry reflected on the playing field – now, once again, but a humble swimming pool. Perhaps the hotel staff instructed the new guests in the game, he mused, and perhaps they still play it to this day. But, he concluded, 'I doubt it'. The moment had passed. Unlike Trugo, Peter Cook's Abu Simbel was unable to transcend a fleeting moment of enthusiasm, and emerge as a true sport.

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108   Stephen Fry, 'A Cook's Tour of Egypt', in Lin Cook (ed), *Peter Cook Remembered,* pp 158-59.

4.1.2   The Social Appeal of Trugo

Over almost seven decades of competition play, the sport of Trugo has maintained a relatively small but fiercely loyal following amongst Melburnians of a certain age. A recurring theme amongst the present generation of members has been the circumstances that saw them discover the sport in the first place. Some became involved because of a prior familial connection – John McMahon, one-time treasurer of Yarraville Trugo Club, recalls that he was attracted to the sport after his father, the noted side-swiper Peter McMahon, asked him to fill in for his team. [109] Hilda Smith, a leading member of the Footscray women's team, is the grand-daughter of Jonathon Cook, who played for the same club in the 1940s, and she still recalls watching him play when she was a small child.[110] More often than not, however, players become involved through curiosity or mere serendipity. Ray Schwartze, a long-time member of the Yarraville Eagles, discovered the sport by accident in the early 1990s while on a pokies bus trip within some friends from the Yarraville Hotel. He recalls: "I got talking with a few of the blokes who played Trugo and they asked me to come down and have a go. I've been there ever since".[111] It was around the same time that Bill Bajada of Yarraville also discovered Trugo in similar circumstances:

> I've lived in the area fifty years and was walking past and started watching. One man said to me, 'come and play', so I did. I love the game. I'll be playing until the club is finished.[112]

According to another player, Keith Haines of Footscray, "I went down there and had a bit of a hit – and kept on going back![113] Of the late Wally Irwin, a much-loved member of the Footscray club, a fellow player recalled

> He just walked in the gate one day to say 'hi'. He'd been to the senior citizen's centre [in Buckley Street] and decided to cross the road to see what the Footscray Trugo Club was all about.[114]

Consequently, social interaction has become a dominant aspect of the game of Trugo. As one journalist once noted, 'the bantering is good-natured, but the rivalry between the clubs goes back many years, even though there is a very social air about the whole enterprise, with afternoon tea provided after each game, and three cheers for the winners, the captains and the highest scorers.[115] Another observer once preceptively pointed out that a Trugo clubroom not only provides a venue for the club during regular play, but also acts as a hub where the members meet, play cards and socialise.[116] This has been a characteristic of Trugo since its earliest days – indeed, when a new shelter was added to the Footscray club's premises in 1942, it was even described in the local press as a 'card pavilion'.[117] Social events, outside the playing of the sport itself, has also been a recurring theme since the earliest days. As early as 1939, the Trugo clubs held a joint Christmas party for their members.[118] During the 1940s, the ladies team was known to organise birthday parties,[119] and even undertake 'a very successful outing to Ferntree Gully'.[120]

However, the social significance of Trugo is perhaps most ably demonstrated by the following quotes from the player themselves, drawn from newspaper articles over the past decade or so:

> The most attractive thing about Trugo is that it is affordable, anyone can play, and it's a challenge. It suits people with low incomes. It's a low-energy, low-cost outdoor activity. These people have got all the complaints but they can still play.[121] [John McMahon of the Yarravile Trugo club]

> I like the social side of it. We love having a little get-together. The ladies are great. It's something different to play.[122] [Jean Ellis of Footscray ladies' club]

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109   'Keeping track of a true game', *Times*, 30 September 2003, p 2.
110   'Sealed with a kiss;, *Mail,* 8 March 2000, p 119.
111   'A perfect moment', *Mail*, 8 December 1999, p 124.
112   'Keeping track of a true game', *Times*, 30 September 2003, p 2.
113   'Over and out', *Mail*, 6 October 1999, p 114.
114   'Farewell Wally, we'll miss you', *Mail,* 7 December 2005, p 98.
115   'Trugo, the fair dinkum game of champions', *Age*, 19 December 2001.
116   'Keeping track of a true game', *Times*, 30 September 2003, p 2.
117   'Card Pavilion for Tru-goers', *Footscray Advertiser*, 4 April 1942, p 7.
118   'Footscray Trugo Club Christmas party', *Footscray Advertiser*, 6 January 1940, p 9.
119   'Birthday part for Trugo veteran', *Footscray Advertiser*, 7 February 1942, p 6.
120   ''Yarraville trugo ladies visit the hills', *Footscray Advertiser*, 27 December 1941, p 8.
121   'Keeping track of a true game', *Times*, 30 September 2003, p 2.

Besides, what other game can you start playing when you're an oldie and become a world champion? When you win in this game, you're not only the best in Melbourne, you're the best in the world.[123] [Don Thomas, Yarraville]

The principle we play on is winning is nice but the most important thing is the pleasure of coming down and socialising with other members and competing with other blokes.[124] [Roy Lane, Ascot Vale]

You meet new people. They're a good crowd. We all get on well together. We always have a cup of tea and a spread – scones, sandwiches and cakes – with the other team.[125] [Una Thomas, Footscray ladies]

Ray Schwartz [Yarraville Eagles] relished the competitiveness out on the greens and the friendships he makes in the clubhouse over a sandwich and a cup of tea. "You meet all different people", he said.[126]

We've got a terrific lot of fellows down here. It's one big happy family. I couldn't wish for a better club to belong to. There's plenty of harmony in the club. [Alex Bain, Yarraville]

Conclusion

As a joint result of its egalitarian origins and the demographic of its players, the game of Trugo has acquired a particular level of social significance that is not often seen in sporting clubs. This is expressed in the built fabric of the clubrooms themselves, which sometimes provide facilities for other recreational activities. In the case of the Footscray club premises, the original clubroom of 1940 was extended by a 'card pavilion' in 1942, and thence by the addition kitchen and toilet facilities to support other social events on the premises. The building itself, a structure of simple form and humble materials, also demonstrates the important social network of the club members, who not only contributed funding for its erection but also, despite their advanced age, offered to assist in its construction and ongoing maintenance.

4.2   Comparative Anlysis

4.1.1   Other Trugo Club sites in Melbourne

The following is an overview of known Trugo club sites around Melbourne, in chronological order from the date of each club's formation.

Yarraville Trugo Club, Yarraville

Like its counterpart in Footscray, the Yarraville Trugo Club was obliged to wait several years until it had its own rink and pavilion. From its inception in early 1937, the club played in the Yarraville Gardens in Hyde Street, and it was not until May 1938 that the following was reported:

A request to the council to grant a strip of land between Fehon and Powell Streets to the Yarraville Trugo Club was made by the president (Mr C Ebeling) and the secretary (Mr Piggott) on Monday night. Mr Piggott asked for two concrete courses and two grass tracks. As an alternative, the speaker asked that the club be allowed to improve its site in the Yarraville Gardens. Crs Anderson and Turner assured the deputation that sympathetic consideration would be given to their requests, and reports from the Curator were called for.[127]

Nothing had transpired several months later, when secretary Willian Piggott was moved to write to the council:

I have been instructed . . . to write asking you if you will go ahead with the little plot of land between Powell and Fehon Streets. It was promised to us four months ago in the council chamber. We make the same plea now as we did then. That is, that 75% of our members live on that side of the line. We have three members over 80 years of age living in the Williamstown Road, and they love the game.[128]

122   'Despite a bad year, they had a true go', *Mail*, 31 March 2004, p 18.
123   'Trugo, the fair dinkum game of champions', *Age*, 19 December 2001.
124   'Doin' doughnuts till they die', *Essendon Gazette*, 21 October 1996, p 9.
125   'Saturday set', *Mail*, 20 October 1999, p 114.
126   'A Perfect moment', *Mail*, 8 December 1999, p 124.
127   'Truego club askes for tracks', *Footscray Advertsier*, 28 May 1938, p 16.
128   Letter, W T Piggott to 'Mayor and Councillors', 20 September 1938. VPRS 8291/P1, Unit 128. PRO.

Figure 11   The Yarraville Trugo Club pavilion and rink (1941; demolished 2006)

The matter was subsequently referred to the Council's Gardens Committee, but a decision had evidently not been made by July 1939, when the newly-formed women's Trugo club also requested permission to play there.[129] Permission was evidently granted soon after, as a subsequent letter, dated 1 August 1939, is concerned with the proposed 'shelters and conveniences' for the Trugo club in Powell Street.[130] The council's correspondence register reveals further discussion of the same topic in May 1940.

The completed pavilion, officially opened on 13 September 1941, was a single-storeyed weatherboard structure with a hipped roof and a skillion verandah along the rink side.[131] Two months after the opening, it was reported that the council had provided some additional fittings, including six seats, four 12' tables, and some barbed wire for the verandah – although it was noted that 'the old timers are to do the work'.[132] Subsequent alterations to the building included sewerage connection, for which a council contract was signed on 11 November 1946.[133] This work was undertaken by local plumber C A Lee and completed by 21 January 1947.   Further additions were made to the building in 1965.[134]

In more recent years, the building was known as the Rupert Bassett Pavilion. The eponymous Rupert Bassett (1909-1972) was a city councillor and one-time Mayor (in 1956) of the City of Footscray, who awarded a number of Trugo trophies during the 1950s. His name is also memorialised in the Rupe [*sic*] Bassett Shield, a pennant competition that is (or was) held between those Trugo teams in the western suburbs.[135]

The building was demolished in 2006.

Newport Trugo Club

The Newport Trugo Club was founded in 1939, but its pavilion was apparently not erected for another two decades. This was located in the local football oval reserve, fronting Market Street, and is first recorded in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1960. Little is known of the building. Some renovations were evidently made in 1965, when the *Footscray Advertiser* reported that 'officials of the Newport Trugo Club are appreciative of the improvements made at their pavilion at Newport Oval by the Williamstown Council'.[136]

The Newport Trugo Club became defunct some time between 1965 and 1985. No trace now remains of either its rinks or its pavilion in the Newport football oval reserve.

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129   Letter, J T Piggott to Town Clerk, 6 July 1939. VPRS 8291/P1, Unit 128. PRO.
130   City of Footscray, *Register of General Correspondence*, 1940-42. Letters dated 9 and 27 May 1940. PRO.
131   'Yarraville Tru Go Pavilion opening today', *Footscray Advertiser*, 13 September 1941, p 13.
132   'Tru-go club assisted', *Footscray Advertiser*, 15 November 1941, p 6.
133   City of Footscray Contract No 38/46 for 'Sewerage Works at Trugo Club'. Unit 29, VPRS 6642/P1 (City of Footscray Official Council Contracts), PRO.
134   'Trugo cup to Yarraville', *Footscray Advertiser*, 27 October 1965, p 41.
135   'Trugo champ', *Western Times*, 17 August 1994, p 45.
136   'Trugo clubs do well in league', *Footscray Advertiser*, 15 September 1965, p 75.

Ascot Vale Trugo Club, Maribyrnong Park

The Ascot Vale Trugo Club (originally Moonee Ponds Trugo Club) was founded in 1948, after Trugo equipment was donated that year to the so-called Pioneers' Retreat in Maribyrnong Park, Ascot Vale. This was erected in 1938 as a meeting place for local elderly men who liked to congregate in the park, and represented the first community project undertaken by the Essendon Rotary Club – the first club of its kind in Melbourne's suburbs.[137] The small hip-roofed brick structure was designed, built and fitted out by Rotary club members at a cost of £272.[138] The next few years saw the donation of recreational equipment including books and board games as well as the Trugo gear in 1948. The club was formed soon after, and admitted to competition in early 1949.[139]

The building remains in use as the headquarters of the Ascot Vale Trugo Club.

South Melbourne Trugo Club, I Howe Crescent, South Melbourne

The South Melbourne Trugo Club was formed during 1949, and was admitted to the competition at the start of the 1950 season. [140] It subsequently established its headquarters at the new senior citizens' centre on the corner of Park Street and Ferrars Place, which is first recorded in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* for 1953. This building was substantially reconstructed in the late 1950s (to the design of architect Horace Tribe), following a capital grant from the State Government.[141]

The building still remains as the headquarters of the South Melbourne Trugo Club.

Queens Park Trugo Club, Moonee Ponds

The formation of a second Trugo Club in Moonee Ponds was prompted by the opening of a second Pioneers' Retreat in that suburb. Such was the success of the first retreat in Maribyrnong Park that the Rotary club soon elected to building another one, in Queen's Park. Funding commenced soon after the first retreat had opened, and a sum of £190 had been raised by 1943.[142] A site was chosen in 1946 and a subscription fund launched in 1949. Construction of the 'Pioneers' House of Friendship', as it was known, began in 1950, and the building was officially opened in April 1952. [143] It may have been designed by prolific local architect Harry Winbush, a prominent Rotarian who gave the invocation at the opening ceremony.[144]

Figure 12   The South Melbourne Trugo Club (c.1952)

Figure 13   The Port Melbourn Trugo Club (c.1953)

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137   *History of the Essendon Rotary Club*, pp.3, 12.
138   *Essendon Gazette*, 29 September 1938.
139   'Trugo', *Footscray Advertiser*, 21 January 1949, p 15.
140   'Trugo', *Footscray Advertiser*, 10 December 1949, p 15.
141   Public Building No 10,523, Unit 1235, VPRS 7882/P2 (Public Building files, Department of Health), PRO.
142   *Essendon Gazette*, 7 October 1943.
143   *History of the Essendon Rotary Club*, p.54.
144   'Pioneer's Retreat: auspicious opening in Queen's Park', *Essendon Gazette*, 10 April 1952, p 6.

The building was used as the headquarters of the Queens Park Old Pioneers' Trugo Club (as it was sometimes known) until at least the mid-1980s.[145] The building was demolished in the 1990s.[146]

Port Melbourne Trugo Club

The Port Melbourne Trugo Club was formed in c.1954, and promptly established itself in Edwards Park, off Esplanade East, where a Trugo green was laid out to the south of a narrow right-of-way, running east-west from the Esplanade, with a small pavilion at its southern edge. Like its counterpart in Yarraville, this was a modest weatherboard structure with a gabled roof and verandah along the rink side. The new complex first appears in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1954, albeit identified only as the 'Port Melbourne Elderly Citizens' Association' rather than a Trugo clubhouse. However, architectural drawings for a subsequent addition to the building refers to its specifically as the 'Trugo Pavilion, Edwards Park'.[147] These works, completed in 1964, comprised a small extension at the rear to house toilet facilities for females. It was followed by several other physical changes over the next decade or so, namely a kitchenette at the rear (1966), new windows to the rink frontage (1969) and a more substantial extension to the west, containing a library and TV room (1976).

The building remains in use as the headquarters of the Port Melbourne Trugo Club.

Preston Trugo Club, St George's Road, Preston.

A Trugo club at Preston had evidently been formed, or was about to be formed, in 1960, when the City of Preston planned to include a Trugo court in the grounds of the new senior citizen's centre on the corner of St George's Road and Cramer Street. The original drawings for these 'proposed elderly citizens clubrooms', dated 23 June 1960, depict a single-storeyed weatherboard building with a double-fronted façade incorporating a verandah to three sides, imparting a somewhat domestic character. The 'proposed Trugo courts' are shown on a slightly later site plan, dated 17 August 1960, indicated as a grassed area (53 feet by 96 feet) to the immediate south of the building, enclosed by a six-foot Cyclone wire fence.[148] The original centre was extended several times over the next few decades, including substantial additions to the north side in 1964, 1966 and 1983. The 1964 alterations also included the laying out of a second Trugo green, located to the immediate west of the existing.

The centre still stands, and is still identified as the headquarters of the Preston Trugo Club. However, the building is currently in somewhat neglected condition, and the adjacent rinks are unkempt and overgrown.

Figure 14   The Preston Trugo Club (1960)

Figure 15   The Sandridge Trugo Club (1963)

145   *Over Fifty years of Trugo*, p 21.
146   Michele Summerton, 'Maribyrnong Park'. Unpublished report.
147   Public Building No 9145. Unit 1064, VPRS 7882/P1, PRO.
148   Public Building No 14,115. Unit 1679, VPRS 7882/P1, PR.

Sandridge Trugo Club, Tucker Avenue, Port Melbourne

The Sandridge Trugo Club was probably formed in 1963, when Trugo rinks were laid out as part of a new senior citizens centre that was proposed to be built in a large reserve on the corner of Tucker Avenue and Howe Parade in Port Melbourne. This unnamed park formed part of the original Garden City residential estate, developed by the State Savings Bank from 1929. The site of the new centre and Trugo rink was formerly occupied by two tennis courts and a small timber pavilion, which had been erected by the bank commissioners in the early 1930s.

Almost thirty years later, the City of Port Melbourne proposed to erect a new and large pavilion as a senior citizen's centre, and to convert the tennis courts to Trugo rinks. An early sketch plan for the proposal, dated 16 May 1963, indicated the 'proposed Trugo green' measuring 90 feet by 90 feet, with a 'proposed pavilion' along its southern edge.[149] The latter was a simple brick veneer building with a broad gabled roof, containing a member's lounge area (with open fireplace), a kitchenette, an equipment store, gardener's room and toilet facilities for male and female players. The plans, prepared by noted commercial architects Harry A & Frank L Norris Pty Ltd, were revised before the final working drawings, dated 19 September 1963, were approved by the council.

The centre remains in use as the headquarters of the Sandridge Trugo Club.

Brunswick Trugo Club, Temple Park , Brunswick

The Brunswick Trugo Club also appears to date from the early 1960s, promptly winning the league premiership in 1965.[150] The following year, the club had based itself at Temple Park, off Gold Street, where a senior citizen's centre – styled as the Old Pioneers' Social Club – had been erected a few years earlier.[151] This building, located in the centre of the small reserve, was subsequently demolished when a new and larger counterpart was proposed in the south-eastern corner of the park. The original plans for the new centre, dated November 1966, indicate a simple brick building with a gabled roof and verandah along its northern face, which opened onto a single 'Tru-go field'. Revised drawings, dated March 1967, showed slight alterations to the plan and form of the building, as well as the addition of a second Trugo rink – designated as a 'practice area' – to the immediate north of the existing one. The building was extended in 1975 by the addition of a small storeroom on the east side, for the storage of Trugo equipment.

The centre remains in use as the headquarters of the Brunswick Trugo Club.

Figure 16   The Brunswick Trugo Club pavilion (1967)

Figure 17   The Coburg Trugo Club pavilion (1929)
(note paved Trugo rink, since removed)

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149   Public Building No 14188. Unit 1689, VPRS 7882/P1, PRO.
150   'Trugo clubs do well in league', *Footscray Advertiser*, 15 September 1965, p 75.
151   Gillian Sansom, 'Trugo', in Helen Penrose (ed), *Brunswick: One History, Many Voices*, p 176. The 'Old Pioneers' Social Club' premises in Temple Park was first recorded in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1963.

Coburg Trugo Club, 11 Harding Street, Coburg

The Coburg Trugo Club was apparently formed in the early 1960s, but subsequently occupied a building of much older vintage. The small structure, fronting Harding Street on the southern edge of the football oval reserve, was originally erected in c.1929 as a tennis court pavilion. This pavilion, and the two tennis courts located to its immediate east, formed part of a broader upgrading of sporting facilities at the reserve at that time, which also included a new football grandstand (1926) and croquet courts (c.1928).[152] The tennis pavilion is representative of its type and era – a gambrel-roofed building on an elongated rectangular plan, with a distinctive exterior finish comprising ruled ashlar walls on a clinker brick plinth, with roughcast banding and moulded trim.

In the late 1950s, the City of Coburg proposed to erect a new senior citizen's centre in the city reserve, and plans (dated September 1957) were prepared for a small building to the immediate north of the tennis courts. It was subsequently decided to erect the building on the site of the eastern tennis court itself, and new plans (dated June 1959) were prepared by another architect. This centre was officially opened on 9 April 1960 by the Mayor, who duly commented that the disused tennis court alongside the new building might soon be converted to a Trugo rink.[153]

The Coburg Trugo Club became defunct in c.2000, and the former tennis pavilion in Harding Street has more recently been occupied by an Italian pensioners club. The strip of vacant land between the pavilion and the senior citizen's centre – former Trugo rink and former tennis court – has since been stripped of its asphalt and landscaped by the City of Moreland, with new garden beds, pathways and bench seating.[154] Today, only a metal signpost (of relatively recent origin) remains to indicate the former presence of the Coburg Trugo Club.

Prahran Trugo Club, Grattan Street, Prahran

The Prahran Trugo Club was apparently also founded in the early 1960s. By the end of that decade, the club had established itself in the Grattan Gardens, off Grattan Street, where a Trugo rink had been laid out to the immediate south of the bowling club.[155] The latter had been a ubiquitous element in the gardens since 1888, although its original pavilion was replaced in 1928 by a new and larger counterpart.[156] To the south-east of the adjacent Trugo rink was second pavilion that served as the headquarters of the Trugo Club. This small building, of uncertain vintage, had an elongated rectangular plan measuring approximately 40 feet by 10 feet.

It was proposed to erect new premises for the Trugo club in 1970, but it was subsequently established that funding would not be available unless the facility could be made available to *all* elderly citizens and not just Trugo club members. Consequently it was decided that the new building in the park would take the form of a generic senior citizens' centre, which just happened to include facilities for the local Trugo club. The new building, designed by Miss T Marcozoni of the Prahran City Council City Engineer's Department, was a single-storey flat-roofed brick building on an elongated plan, incorporating a large hall, kitchen, storerooms and toilets. An early site plan for the project, dated April 1970, noted that the 'existing Trugo club' to the south of the bowling green would be demolished on the completion of the new centre. The latter was officially opened by the then Mayor of Prahan, Councillor Chris Gahan, in 1971. The Chris Gahan Centre, as it was subsequently named, was extensively upgraded in 1985-86, and was re-dedicated on 20 March 1987.

The Chris Gahan Centre, home of the Prahran Trugo Club from 1971 until 1999, still stands in the Grattan Gardens. No trace, however, now remains of the nearby Trugo rink. The entire northern end of the gardens was redeveloped after the closure of the bowling club in 1999; the buildings were razed and the site is now occupied by a new facility, the Grattan Gardens Community Centre. A small interpretative signboard, with historic photographs and information, marks the location of the bowling club, but there is no mention of the Trugo club.

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152   Richard Broome, *Coburg: Between Two Creeks*, p 225.
153   'Elderley citizens get their club – Mayor suggests Trugo green', *Coburg Courier*, 12 April 1960, p 12.
154   'Moreland's improving', *Inside Moreland*, No 2 (Summer 2005), p 26.
155   Public Building No 14338. Unit 1714, VPRS 7882/P1, Public Record Office.
156   Interpretative plaque currently located in Grattan Gardens.

Conclusion

The foregoing review of Trugo club sites around Melbourne establishes that most of the infrastructure associated with the sport dates from the post-war period. In particular, the two decades between 1945 and 1965 can be considered as something of a Trugo boom. At least ten new clubs were founded during that period, most occupying newly-established rinks and buildings throughout the northern and inner southern suburbs.

One recurring theme in the post-war development of Trugo facilities is that none of these new buildings were, in fact, specifically built for the sole use of Trugo club. Rather, local councils preferred to erect a more generic and inclusive senior citizen's centre that would be available for the use of *all* pensioners within the community. Trugo rinks were subsequently provided as just one of a number of recreational facilities at these shared centres.

It is only those two pre-war clubhouses, at Yarraville and Footscray, that stand out as the only strictly purpose-built Trugo clubhouses that were actually lobbied, partly funded and even partly constructed by the club members themselves, for their own exclusive use.

It is correct to say that the Trugo pavilions at Footscray and Yarraville are not actually the oldest Trugo buildings in sheer terms of physical fabric, as they are predated by the premises of the Trugo clubs at Ascot Vale (1938) and Coburg (1929). It must be noted, however, that the two latter examples were not actually purpose-built for the clubs that occupied them. Rather, they simply represented existing buildings that became the headquarters of Trugo clubs many years after their original construction.

Since the unfortunate demolition of the Trugo pavilion at Yarraville, the one at Footscray now stands out as a unique example. It is not only the oldest surviving purpose-built Trugo clubhouse but also the only one dating from the initial pre-war phase in the sport's history. The building also remains as the only Trugo club premises that was erected for the exclusive use of the club members themselves, in stark contrast to those more generic facilities provided by municipal councils in the post-war period.

4.3   Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The Footscray Trugo Club premises at 138 Buckley Street, occupying a large and prominent site with three street frontages, comprises a grassed rink area – enclosed by a tall cyclone wire fence – with a clubroom at the rear in the form of an elongated weatherboard building with hipped roof of corrugated galvanised steel. The premises is the home of the Footscray Trugo Club, which established the rinks in 1938 and erected the first stage of the present building in 1940. This sport, which traces its origins back to the Newport railway workshops of the 1920s, uses mallets to hit a rubber ring through a pair of miniature goalposts. It was invented by local retiree Thomas Grieves, who went on to become founding president of the first Trugo club, at Yarraville, in 1937.

How is it significant?

The Footscray Trugo Club premises is of historical and social significance to the City of Maribyrnong

Why is it significant?

Historically, the Footscray Trugo Club retains important associations with a idiosyncratic local pastime that is one of very few contenders for the title of a unique Australian sport that was entirely devised (as opposed to simply adapted) by Australians. Founded only a few weeks after the original club at Yarraville, the Footscray Club was one of only five Trugo clubs that date back to the sport's initial phase of development in the late 1930s and early 1940s. With three of these early clubs (at Williamstown, Newport and Carlton) long since defunct, and the one at Yarraville no longer occupying its original premises, the Buckley Street site of the Footscray club provides unique evidence of the earliest days of competitive Trugo in Melbourne.

As the only surviving example of purpose-built Trugo clubhouse, partly funded, constructed and maintained by the members themselves, the building at Footscray also stands out from the numerous post-war Trugo facilities scattered through Melbourne's northern and inner southern suburbs, which were invariably established by local councils as generic senior citizens' centres that just happened to include a Trugo rink alongside.

Socially, the Trugo club and rinks in Buckley Street have been an important focus for numerous successive generations of retirees in Footscray and environs. Trugo is a sport that both nurtures and values social interaction – perhaps more so than many other organised sports – amongst its club members. This is ably demonstrated by

the built form of the pavilion, which included a shelter for card-playing that, with the addition of a kitchenette, has since been a focus for various club social activities, such as television watching and ubiquitous afternoon teas. The fabric of the building itself, with its simple form, *ad hoc* additions and unpretentious interior finishes, also provides evidence of the close-knit social aspect of the game. It still demonstrates the collective input and enthusiasm of generations of club members who have not only raised funds for its erection but have assisted in its construction and ongoing maintenance for many years.

APPENDIX A: EARLY FOOTSCRAY TRUGO CLUB MEMBERS

The following table lists those individuals known to have been members of the Footscray Trugo Club from its inception in May 1937 until the end of 1942. The list is derived from write-ups of Trugo matches published in the *Footscray Advertiser* during that period, which mentioned the names of the top scoring players –invariably citing an initial and surname. Where possible, full names and dates of birth and death have been determined by other sources such as electoral rolls and civil registration records.

During 1940, the club members split into two separate teams – usually designated as Footscray 1 and 2, but sometimes as Footscray A and B. Players of the respective teams are indicated where known.

Name	Born/died	From (at least)	To (at least)	Team (from 1940)	Other information
Boyle, John		1937 Jun	1937 Jun		
Brown, H		1937 July	1937 Jul		
Burke, S		1941 Mar	1941 Oct	Footscray 2	
Charles, James		1938 Apr	1938 Jun		
Coy, Walter	(1870-1953)	1937 May	1942 Jan		President, 1937-1942
Dunn, J		1941 Oct	1941 Oct	Footscray 1	
Gray, E		1939 Nov	1942 Jun	Footscray 2	Secretary, 1942
Haynes, John Thomas	(1868-1943)	1937 Jun	1942 Jan	Footscray 2	Vice-President, 1938
Hennessy		1939 July	1939 July		
Kleesh, Andrew Sackville	(1869-1941)	1937 Jun	1941 Feb	Footscray 2	
Johns, W		1938 May	1938 May		
Kemp, Harry (Henry)		1940 Mar	1949		President, 1949
Lins, William Peter	(1867-1943)	1937 May	1942 Jan	Footscray 2	Treasurer, 1937-38
McGowan, T		1938 Apr	1942 Jun	Footscray 1	
McNish, George	(1868-1942)	1938 May	1942 Aug	Footscray 1	
McVick, G		1938 Jun	1938 Jun		Possibly a misprint for G McNish
Miller, F		1937 Jun	1942 Apr	Footscray 1	
Miller, George Darlington	(1870- ?)	1937 May			Secretary, 1937-38
Miller, Peter	(1868-1939)	1937 Jun	1937 Jun		Elder brother of G D Miller
Moloney, Jeremiah	(1864-1941)	1939 May	1941 Dec	Footscray 1	
Munton, J		1937 Jun	1937 Jun		
O'Brien, J		1939 May	1939 May		
O'Brien, W		1938 Jul	1938 Jul		
Perry, R		1939 Jan	1939 Jan		
Sayers, J		1941 Oct	1941 Oct	Footscray 1	
Stephens, J		1941 Nov	1942 Jan	Footscray 2	Secretary, 1941-42
Strong, J		1939 Jul	1941 Oct	Footscray 1	
Thomas, L		1937 Jun	1942 Jan	Footscray 2	
Toy, William	(1867-1939)	1938 Jun	1938 Jun		
Whitty, A		1938 May	1939 Jul		Secretary, 1938-39
Wishart, John McMurchy	(1867-1946)	1941 Apr	1942 Jan	Footscray 2	
Wildman, George	(1873-1953)	1941 Feb	1942 Jan	Footscray 2	President, 1942
Young		1937 Dec	1937 Dec		

APPENDIX B: A GLOSSARY OF TRUGO TERMS

The following is a brief list of terms that have been used, both historically and currently, during Trugo matches.

Possible The term to describe a perfect score of 24 goals; the Trugo equivalent of 180 points in darts or a 300 game in tenpin bowling. The term was first recorded in 1937.

Side swiping A stance adopted by Trugo players whereby the wheel is hit after being placed alongside the player, not unlike golf putting. This was the position adopted by the original Trugo players until tunnelling became popular among male players during the 1950s.[157] Today, side-swiping still remains as the preferred stance for female Trugo players. The late Peter McMahon, formerly of the Yarraville Trugo Club, was a well-known male side-swiper.[158]

Tunelling A stance adopted by male Trugo players whereby the player places the wheel between his feet, bends over, and hits it between his legs with his back to the goals. According to one source, the 'tunnelling revolution' hit the sport in the 1950s, and changed the men's game almost overnight.[159]

Wheel The term for the donut-shaped rubber ring, which is 4cm thick and has a diameter of 11cm. Trugo was originally played using buffer washers from railway carriage couplings, but, in these more enlightened times, the rubber rings are manufactured specifically for the game.[160]

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157 'Trugo, a fair dinkum game of champions', *Age*, 19 December 2001.
158 'Tru-go alive and well', *Western Times*, 27 March 1991, p 45.
159 'Trugo, a fair dinkum game of champions', *Age*, 19 December 2001.
160 'Keeping track of a true game', *Times*, 30 September 2003, p 2.