



## History and Heritage Series

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

#### The Story Behind the Place Names in the Club



These Background Notes have been prepared as 'bite-sized' light reading for our Members. The intention is to broaden understanding of selected aspects of the Club's rich history and heritage, and the remarkable people who have contributed to its development over the years. They are based primarily on a number of websites, with specific additional information in places. We acknowledge that there are probably errors and omissions. **Please contact the Club if you have additional information or comments that will assist to improve these notes.**

We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed over time. They are intended as casual reading, for private use by Members only, and as they lack the rigor, attributions, and acknowledgements required for academic or public use, Members are requested not to reproduce or distribute them outside of our membership.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

### The Story Behind the Place Names in the Club

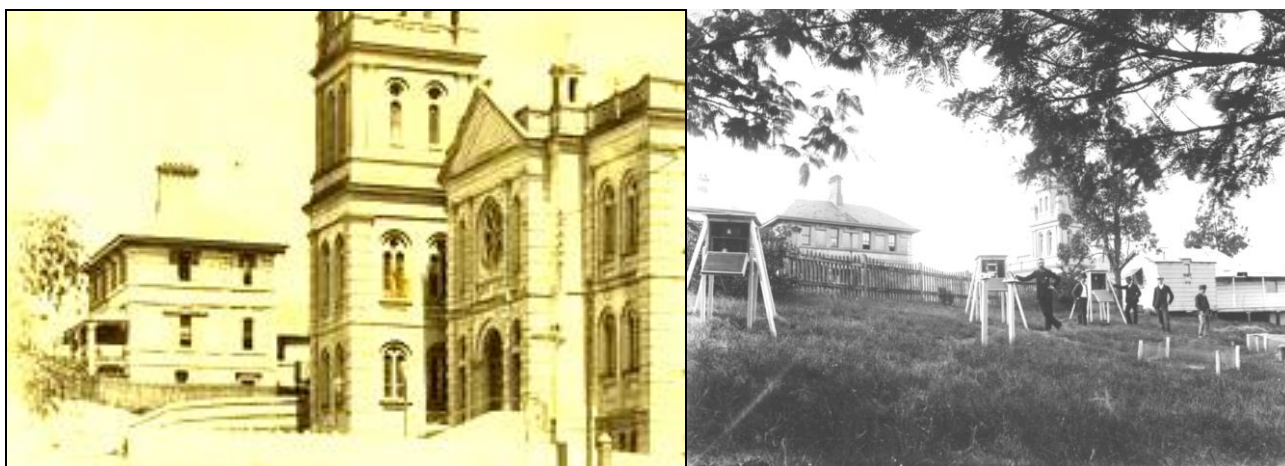
Ever wondered why the Glasgow Room, Norman Pixley Room and other places within the Club's premises got their name? Or even why the buildings are called 'Montpelier' and the Green House?

Of course, we need such names for bookings, management, communications etc, but why were those names chosen and what is the story behind the names?

This Background Note aims to summarise the story and/or the people behind our Place Names. It starts with the buildings' names and then 'walks through' the buildings floor by floor.

#### 'Montpelier'

Our brick building ('Montpelier') was operating as guest-house/boarding-house when the Club purchased it in 1946. The current building was constructed about 1910, replacing a pair of semi-detached villas also named 'Montpelier' erected on the site in 1864. The name has continued since the original 'Montpelier' through to today.



*The original Montpelier*

'Montpelier' is a common place name throughout the world, with cities and towns so named all over the globe. It is not unusual in Brisbane with Montpelier Road, Montpelier Street and a few grand houses named Montpelier around Australia including 'Montpelier House' at Bowen Hills. They probably all originate from the Montpellier<sup>1</sup> in southern France and/or the Dukes of Montpellier from the same region.

For more information on the history and heritage of the current buildings, or the story behind the Club's acquisition of them see the two other Notes within this series (see: *Buildings. Current Premises. Early History and Heritage*; and: *Buildings. Current Premises Acquisition*)

#### The Green House

When the Club bought these premises in 1946 there were two separated buildings erected on the site: the three-story masonry building (Montpelier) that was built and operated as an exclusive private guest house; and the adjoining timber doctor's surgery and residence, erected 1906-07. There is no record of the timber building having a formal name at time of purchase. It was painted green and through common reference within the Club, the green house became the *Green House*.

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<sup>1</sup> Montpellier is a city in southern France, near the Mediterranean coast. Founded in the 8th century, it developed as a trading station for spice imports in the 10th century and acquired a charter in 1141. Montpellier is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest city of France (2004 pop est.: 244,100), and is also the fastest growing city in the country over the past 25 years.

After purchase of the Club's premises the use of the Green House continued to concern the committee, as it was aiming to maximise return on this particular investment. The sale of this property was not thought to be prudent as the committee decided that the value of the property must appreciate.

Over Christmas 1946, the president received approaches to use the Green House from the Master Mariners Association, Ray White (the real estate company), and the Moreton Club. The committee resolved that the Green House be let to the Moreton Club for a rental of £1050 a year, and thus began the Moreton Club's association with the United Service Club.

### **Moreton Room**

The name Moreton Room is linked to the Moreton Club which can trace a surprisingly indirect link to Lord Morton, president of the Royal Society in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The Moreton Club was founded on 1 October 1924. The founding group suggested the Princess Club as the name for the new club and put the suggestion forward for voting with a selection of alternative names. The Moreton Club, referring to Moreton Bay<sup>2</sup>, was chosen.

It was 33 years before the Moreton Club owned its own premises. It had moved several times around the CBD since 1924: King House (in Queen Street), 'Eskdale' (in Wharf Street), and Terrica House (on the corner of Creek and Adelaide Streets) all housed the Moreton Club at various times until arriving at the United Service Club in 1947.

In the early 1950s, the Moreton Club offered to buy its rented premises, (ie the Green House) from the United Service Club, but it was not for sale. In 1957 the Moreton Club bought its current premises in New Farm and moved there from the Green House. The Moreton Room name continues to commemorate the long association of the two clubs.

### **Norman Pixley Room**

Commander Norman Stewart Pixley, MBE, VRD, Kt ON, RANR, (3 May 1898- 4 Jan 1989) was a member of the Club since the 1930s. He served in the RAN Reserve for 33 years with high distinction, saw action in both World Wars.



His service to the Club included as a Committee member and later as President 1937-38, Trustee 1964-1988 and was elected a Life Member in 1977.

His qualities of leadership were demonstrated in many activities he undertook during his life:

- He founded the Sea Cadet Movement and the Queensland Division of the Navy League and was its President until 1969.
- He was a keen historian and wrote and delivered more than twenty major historical papers to the Royal Queensland Historical Society.

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<sup>2</sup> The name Morton's Bay was given by Captain Cook when he passed the area on 15 May 1770. The name was in honour of the Scottish Earl of Morton, then the president of the Royal Society. The spelling *Moreton* was an error in the first published account of Cook's voyage and has been perpetuated since.

- He had a powerful influence on the Society's administration of the Royal Queensland Historical Society and served as President of the Society for many years, succeeding Sir Raphael Cilento in 1968.
  - In addition to the Presidential duties, his initiatives included the founding of the Norman Pixley Maritime Museum at Brisbane in 1954, and arranging the State celebration of the James Cook Bicentenary with a ceremony at Possession Island, Torres Strait, in 1970.
  - For his work in the cause of history the Society elected him a Fellow and made him an Honorary Life Member.
- He also played a signal part in the formation of the National Trust of Queensland, of which he was a Life Member.
- In the business world he rose to be President of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce and was leader of the Australian Delegation to a conference of Commonwealth Chambers of Commerce in London in 1951.
- As Honorary Consul for the Netherlands from 1948 to 1972 he became Dean of the Consular Corps and in recognition of his services was made a Knight of the Order of Orange-Nassau by the Queen of the Netherlands.

Other Royal honours that have come to him have been those of Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and Member of the Order of the British Empire.

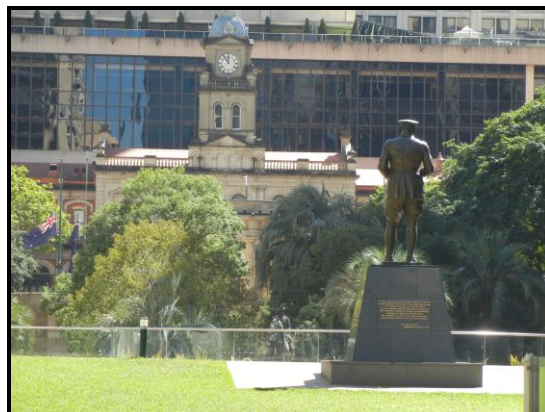
He donated a trophy for the Club's annual golf competition and the Norman Pixley Cup Day continues as a golf competition continues to the present day.

### **Glasgow Room**

The main dining room of the Club is named The Glasgow Room in honour of Major General The Honourable Sir (Thomas) William Glasgow, KCB CMG DSO. He was a born-and-bred Queenslander and a long-term Club member with a remarkable and interesting story.

- He served in the South African War (Boer War), at Gallipoli, and was arguably one of the best senior officers on the Western Front during the Great War. He commanded 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade on the Western Front as a Brigadier General, and later (with promotion to Major General) he commanded 1<sup>st</sup> Division from May 1918 to May 1919
- After the war, he was elected to the Senate in 1919, rose to Cabinet as Minister for Home and Territories on 28 June 1926, and was Minister for Defence from April 1927 to October 1929.
- He later served Australia our first Australian High Commissioner to Canada during the Second World War.
- Glasgow returned to Australia in 1945 and once again resumed his pastoral and business interests.
- He led the Brisbane Anzac Day march for over 20 years.

A statue of Sir William now stands opposite the GPO, gazing over Anzac Square, and a portrait hangs in our Glasgow Room.



For more biographical information, see the separate Note in this series (*People. Notable Members. Glasgow*).

## Royal Room

The Royal Room is so named because of the portraits of several generations of the Royal Family that are the primary theme of the room. Many of them were autographed as souvenirs of their visits.

Interestingly, these Royal visitors included two future Kings within a space of seven years. HRH The Prince of Wales was persuaded to pay a brief visit to at short notice in August 1920, and His Royal Highness The Duke of York<sup>3</sup> visited the Club in 1927.

The Club House was at 70 George Street at that time and there is a photo of the 1927 visit hanging in the Level 2 hallway.

## The Montpelier Room

This name is taken from the name of the original building on this site and the name still used for the replacement brick building that the club currently occupies.

## The LAL Little Library

Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Alfred Little MBE ED, was the Club's President in 1945-46 and later a Life Member.

In 1946, he led the Club through the process of selecting and purchasing our current premises. Little was a no-nonsense man of action and put himself somewhat ahead of both the committee and the membership and anticipated the decision of the special general meeting to purchase the buildings. He had earlier accepted the offer by Major Davies to sell the premises at 173-183 Wickham Terrace, to the club with Little giving his personal guarantee to the Bank of New South Wales, pending approval by the special general meeting.



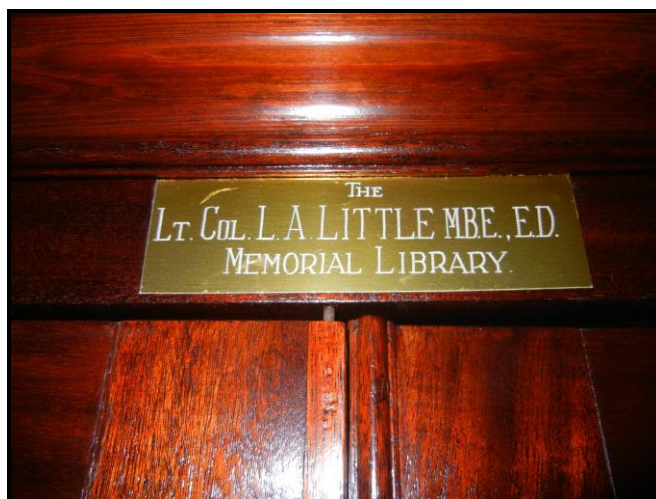
*Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Alfred Little MBE (1903-74)  
President 1945-46. Life Member 1947*

In pre-internet days, it was essential that the club maintained a high quality library for reference and as a lending library, and during his term of service on the Committee. 'Lal' was instrumental in being a champion for the preservation and enhancement of our library.

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<sup>3</sup> HRH The Prince of Wales ascended to the throne as Edward VIII on 20 January 1936 after the death of his father, George V. Before the end of the year, however, he took the unprecedented step of abdicating so that he could marry a twice-divorced American woman, Mrs Wallis Simpson. On the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936, the Duke and Duchess came to the throne as George VI and Queen Elizabeth, and parents of our present Queen.

A cedar bookcase and library stands in our reading room, dedicated to his memory.



### Bill Brown Billiard Room



William Alfred "Bill" Brown, OAM (31 July 1912 – 16 March 2008) was a long-term Club member who served as a Flight Lieutenant in the Second World War.

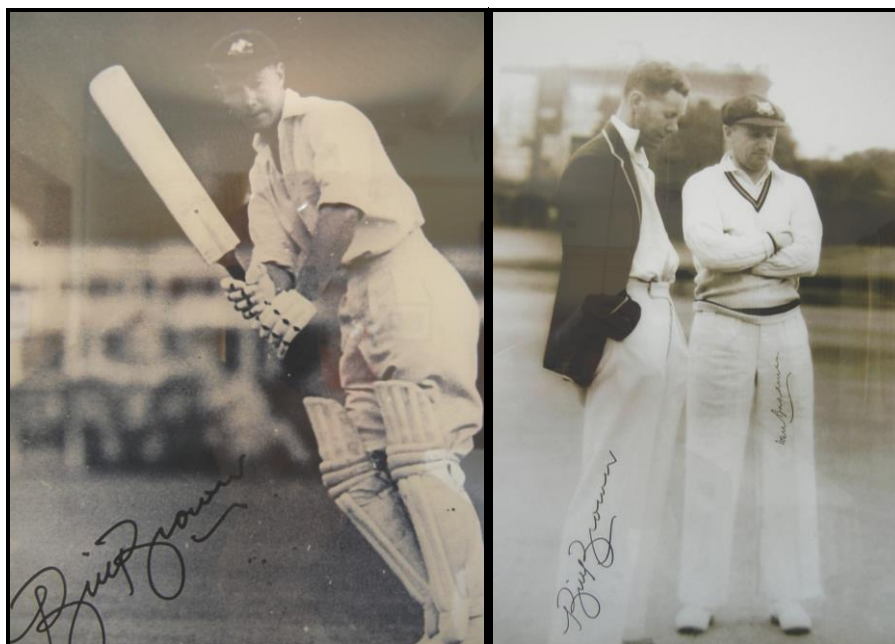
He is better known for his cricket career and his subsequent service to cricket, and perhaps as the man behind Bill Brown's Sports Store which he owned and operated in George Street for some 30 years from 1946.

Although he was born in Toowoomba his family moved to Sydney when he was only three years old. He began his representative cricket career began playing for NSW and in 1934 the then 21-year-old was presented his first Test cap. Bill returned to Queensland in 1936 as Queensland captain.

- Brown played alongside the likes of Bradman, Ponsford, O'Reilly and Grimmett.
- In all, he toured England three times, twice before the Second World War and once afterwards, the latter with Donald Bradman's *Invincibles* who toured England in 1948 without defeat.
- His international career included such highlights as a double century at Lord's and the honour of captaining Australia in the first-ever Test against New Zealand.
- He was named Wisden cricketer of the year in 1939.

Bill enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War. The war cost Brown his peak cricketing years.

Bill stayed close to the game after his playing career ended, sitting on Queensland's selection panel in 1950-51 and 1959-60, and the Australian panel in 1953-53. He was the first Queenslander in 23 years to serve as a national selector.



Bill was made a life member of the Queensland Cricket Association in 1992. In 2000, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours list for services to cricket and was inducted into Queensland Sports Federation's Hall of Fame in 2009.

#### Sir Edwin Tooth MC

The billiard table and cabinet in the Bill Brown Room were donated by Lady Tooth<sup>4</sup> in memory of her husband, Captain Sir Edwin M Tooth MC.



Sir Edwin was a remarkable Club member who was well known as a business leader and for his philanthropy.

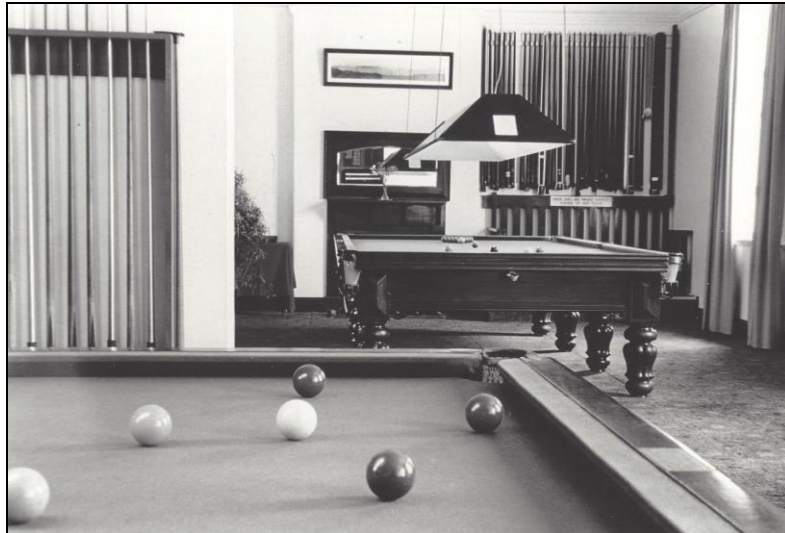
- Enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force on 5 July 1915, Tooth was commissioned in October and promoted lieutenant in January 1916.
- On the Western Front he served with the 2nd Tunnelling Company.
- From 29 September to 3 October 1918 he took charge of roadwork near Bellicourt, France while under heavy fire and was awarded the Military Cross for his actions.
- On his way home to Brisbane after the war, he studied the motor industry in the United States.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Eloise Marguerite Tooth (nee Fuller) was born on 14 July 1893 in the Endeavour River area near Cooktown, Queensland

- In 1923 he started his long career in the motor industry by forming Austral Motors in Adelaide Street where he later became the distributor for Dodge vehicles in Queensland, Northern NSW and the NT.
- Later he obtained the franchises for De Soto, the English Standard, Chrysler-Plymouth and the agency for Ferguson tractors.

Sir Edwin's philanthropic gestures were legendary giving generously to medical, educational and charitable institutions including the largest donation Legacy had ever received.

He was a member of the Brisbane Club, Tattersall's Club, and United Service Club and was made a Knight Bachelor in the 1957 New Year's Honours List for his public and philanthropic services. He died on 17 May 1957 aged 70.



Incidentally, the current billiards room is now a shadow of its former self. It was previously much larger with three billiard tables (the club acquired its first table around the turn of the century) and had much use in the post-war years when the average age of the membership was much younger than today and our Members included many fit, and energetic (and often somewhat competitive) young veterans.

The name of the billiards and cards sub-committee was changed to sports, billiards and cards in about 1937-38 and a donation by Captain RAN Plant was used to purchase a perpetual cup for the annual billiards competition.

The Club had a very busy and diverse sporting programme in those days, including cricket, golf, tennis, billiards etc. Several trophies from that era remain on display in the Bill Brown Room today.

Billiards and snooker continued to be very popular into the 60s and 70s, and there are reports in the Club's History of snooker balls being found in garden beds some distance (both vertically and horizontally) from the room, leading to a suspicion that the ban prohibiting the playing of 'slush'<sup>5</sup> was being overlooked by some Members, from time to time. Over time, there was no longer a need for three billiard tables as usage waned, and the greater part of the original billiard room was converted into what is today known as *The Queensland Room*.

### **The Queensland Room**

This name acknowledges the strong and close links that the Club enjoyed with the Colony before federation, through the service of our members in its Military and Marine Defence Forces. The name also acknowledges the assistance provided by the Queensland Government through the provision of an annual £50 grant and accommodation, from the time of the Club's founding in 1892 until Federation.

<sup>5</sup> 'Slush' is a vigorous game best played on a full-size billiard table, usually involving high-spirited young officers and high-velocity billiard balls. It is universally banned in all officers' messes but it seems to develop irresistible appeal to young officers late in the evening, often following mess dinners after senior officers and guests have departed.