

HISTORY OF B&S AND QBSA – SECTION 3 – 1950 to 1970

The era 1950 onwards, was chosen because it has taken the author largely from reliance on the digitised word from newspapers to somewhat into living memory. At this time, some of the older surviving members of the QBSA became involved as players and administrators. However, this period has brought with it some problems for the author.

Printed records henceforth are available only via the medium of microfilm in the State Library of Qld (SLQ) for the Brisbane Telegraph, Courier Mail, Sunday Truth and “The Referee” [NSW] Newspapers. A test run recently discovered that the Telegraph alone (traditionally best sporting coverage in Qld) occupied two rolls of film for the month of January, 1948 alone. The film records are on a page by page, day by day basis for each edition and the “Telly” sometimes had three or four editions daily. These rolls took two hours to examine, with only one small result for the cause. It’s going to take some time!

To those who have read the first section of this attempt at the history of the QBSA, it might seem that with the turning of one electronic page, World War 2 was ignored and had little effect on Queensland Billiards and Snooker games, and therefore on the QBSA. Surely it was detrimental, but as we found, there was at least one really positive outcome, which will be canvassed a little later.

One outcome obvious from research is that no contests were conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) from 1941 to 1945, and in some events, 1946 as well. In Australia the former period was the case. This affected both amateurs as well as professionals; male and female; Billiards and Snooker. It is felt, as a result, that the same fate would have applied to respective State Championships.

World War 2

It seems easy to surmise that the state of Qld as a whole was virtually unaffected. However, because of the “Brisbane Line”, a plan of the Federal Government to concede the top half of Australia to the Japanese in the event of an invasion, it was affected. The invasion came as close as New Guinea and other northern neighbours and Qld came so close to be living in the shade of the Rising Sun. Also, the author was not aware personally that Townsville and Mossman were actually attacked by Japanese? Food and petrol rationing and blackouts were also imposed, but of course not at the stringent levels experienced in the UK.

So, just what Billiards and Snooker was available for the fanciers? It has been learned that a large number of billiard rooms were forced to close on account of the war. Licensed clubs were in their infancy. The pubs still had a table to a large extent. A lot of ambos and furies had access at the workplace to pass the long shifts on standby. However, environments, with structured competitions were few. In any event, the youth of Australia, particularly the young men, were “*missing in action*” overseas, or unavailable, being engaged in essential occupations and other supporting roles at home.

However, several of our most accomplished players held the fort with exhibitions of Billiards and Snooker of a fund raising nature. The most active and undoubtedly the best, was Walter Lindrum.

The Lindrum War Drive



Tooeys Pty Ltd of Sydney, self-proclaimed alcohol brewer of “*the best brew of all time*”, joined with “*the best (Billiard player) ever*” to support him in his drive for war funds, by reprinting his earlier book

(With thanks to “Billiards and Snooker”, by Walter Lindrum, Compliments of Tooeys Ltd, Sydney)

Thousands of these little ‘how to play Billiards’ booklets were sold and raffled along with a Lindrum rosewood cue, at hundreds of demonstration events by Lindrum. This means that the book, however desirable, will never be extremely valuable, but is still relatively easy to acquire in good condition. You won’t be surprised that he also toiled

for many other charities and fund raisers without a fee, raising anything up to 400 pounds for an evening. He gave so much, but did not die a wealthy man.



Sometimes he had to set up a portable "short" table himself in the process. The rumoured gain for the Robert Menzies government from the war drive was substantial: *"During the Second World War, Lindrum performed about 4,000 exhibition games, raising over £500,000 for the war effort (including revenues from sales of his book). Over his lifetime he raised more than £2 million for charity. He was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1951, and an Officer*

of the order (OBE) in the 1958 honours list."

(Source: famepeople.com)



Lindrum was denied a Knighthood because he had been divorced.

So, if the impact of WW2 upon our games was all very negative stuff, what positive outcomes could there be for the Queensland Amateur Billiards and Snooker Assn, (QABSA)?

In 1916 the seed was sown nationally for what we now know as the RSL. It has earlier been known by several names. Sub-branches were starting to be formed, and, at the time of writing now exist in virtually every Qld. town and suburb. These evolved as a direct result of the camaraderie, concern and mate-ship shown by the "diggers" for the welfare of their mates during and after WW1. It was somewhere to meet and maintain friendships and tend to the welfare of the returned men and women.

With the passage of time, many RSL Sub-branches were accompanied by a Licensed Services Club, under the auspices of its sub-branch. In South East Qld (SEQ) this really bore fruit for the QBSA because many of the clubs had billiard tables; subsequently became QBSA affiliates; and provided teams and cueists for the various competitions. This is likely the strongest group of affiliates of all, which peaked in numbers in the 80's. Many of the clubs were established on Government or Council land; on a peppercorn lease; initially with a tin shed, and, from the proceeds of chook raffles, became the beautiful clubs we enjoy to this day.

However, in 1948 only two liquor licenses had been issued to Qld RSL Clubs.

Snooker: Following resumption here in 1946, it has noted that it wasn't until 1960 that a Queenslander, Len Rahilly got amongst the silverware as runner-up to Max Williams (SA) in the National Snooker Champs. Len had been professional player previously. Max dominated national snooker in the 60-70's with some nine titles, so it was no shame to Len to go runner-up. The very next year, Jim Lyons (Qld) repeated the dose as runner-up to Bill Barrie, another multiple champion. Jim and Len will still be remembered by the greybeards.

Billiards: Following resumption here it is noted there were no Qld. winners, [apart from previously mentioned Sam Ryan (1930) and Albert Sakzewski (1932, with a 206 tournament highest break)]. Notwithstanding, Zeigler, Ryan, Sakzewski and Pitman, were all to be runner-up at least once in the chase for a national Billiards title. (Refer earlier paper 1788-1949).

Not until 1996, when Danik Lucas from Qld, took out the title at Bribie Island, was another local cueist able to do so.

Sadly, very few records seem to be produced or have survived and the decision has had to be taken to move directly to the last era, that from 1970 to current times in order to utilize the Members memories and some existent records.

To be continued (hopefully)

An Absolute Windfall!

Author's Note (7 September, 2017:

As a result of my practice of contacting former QBSA executive officers, Life Members and older members; it's Past President and Life Member John Orr has given the QBSA a large quantity of old records. These have been held in trust by John on behalf of the Assn in the hope that the organisation would achieve stability and a clubhouse or offices of a more permanent nature as a safe repository for them. Amongst these is a minute book of AGM, Committee and SGM meetings from March 13 1947, to 31 Oct, 1975 and associated, contemporary records.

These are deemed to be irreplaceably invaluable to the Qld Billiards and Snooker Assn Inc.

For some years now, the Assn has held office space at Sports House, a Qld Government Facility of office/meeting rooms mainly for minor sports. It was considered not really safe because of the security of tenure. It was a condition of lease that the Assn have a paid administrator and was borne out in 2011, when the QBSA could no longer afford a paid administrator. This resulted in the loss of considerable space when the QBSA had to terminate the officer. Long term survival at the centre is now considered doubtful.

John Orr has more, later, material of all sorts available, but it is considered wise to process what we have first as an expression of our intent and good will, in return for the confidence and trust he has shown. It has been decided to tackle this period first because, following on is a period of "living memory", which can be compiled more easily otherwise. The material has been given permanently as QBSA property, so storage is a consideration.

What I have initially received includes a large Minute Book of AGM, SGM and Committee Meeting hand-written minutes which will fill many voids in the 1950-1970 period. I have now read all of these minutes describing the period, some 250 pages. They have been summarised meeting by meeting and information and relevant events compiled as well. I will attach copies to the first page of the Minute Book for ease of future reference.

History of B&S and QBSA – SECTION 3 - 1950 to 1970 – Supplement

QABSA (Qld Amateur Billiards & Snooker Assn) Status Summary

In January, 1947 the Assn was called The Qld Amateur Billiards Association (QABA). The Committee comprised the President Hugh Titcombe, Mr R N Graves Secretary/Treasurer; a Committee of 6 Vice Presidents and 9 Committeemen. These are typical of the numbers of persons generally involved, although later many secretaries also performed the treasury function, as did presidents on some occasions. At the AGM Mr Graves was granted Life Membership for years of long worthy service. He retired and was replaced by Mr J (Jack) Devon, who would go on to provide the same great service for a long time. Businessman Andrew Thurlow was elected Patron, a position he would hold for another four years. There had been earlier meetings, but no record exists. The QABA was affiliated with Australian Council (AABSA) then and Snooker fixtures had been resumed in 1946. There is no record of Billiard fixtures. Snooker fixture teams comprised 4 players in A Grade only.

The QABSA was granted the honour of staging the inaugural Aust. Snooker Championships.

Later, Snooker fixture teams comprised 4 players in A Grade (Stanfast Cup) and 6 in B (Heiron & Smith Shield). However B Grade played during the week as individuals whilst A Grade was a team event, home and away, with all players present on the night. The C Grade Snooker (4 players) was not introduced until 1950, also playing as individuals). Billiards fixtures were for 75 minutes but reduced to one hour later.

Hugh Titcombe began representing the QABSA on Australian Council (AABSA). He began delegation in 1947 to the 18th Aust Council meeting and did so for 10 years in all. He played for his beloved *Labour League through to the 70's.

* (Forerunner of the Trades & Labor Council which helped sponsor the creation of the Australian Labor Party).

The Fabulous Fifties

Australia emerged from the dark depression and war years into a period of prosperity and high employment. Generally the population was enjoying personal wealth and free spending. Employment was high and people were encouraged to spend their money freely. Not so the QABSA, unfortunately. It was becoming obvious from the minutes that the QABSA had money problems. In 1950 it was unable to pay 105 pounds owing to Aust Council, but paid 30 pounds (= \$1,700 in 2017). It is noted that W (Bill) South attended his first meeting, 1952, which would become a long and noteworthy term of service to the Assn.

All fixtures now had to be played as a team, since B Grade playing single matches created too many forfeits and disputes. In Billiards, the 15 Hazard rule was introduced. (Previously 25)

O (Ozzie) Pitman, a professional player, was refused entry to the '53 Australian Billiards Championship, but was later granted amateur status; whilst the next year Qld organised the Australian Amateur Championships. These were performed at the Science Hall, RNA with Seating for 1,200. 400 of these (premier seats) were pre-sold. Robert Marshall of WA, won with a 702 World Record break. The best outcome was a 260 pound (profit some \$9000 in 2017). Looks really good, but it is presumed that, because of ABSC equalisation scheme, all states would have shared this. Not so good.

The World "Open" Snooker Champs, (unofficial world Amateur Champs), were held, Brisbane, June 1954. Australia provided 2 players; India 4; and England 6 players. (Regret no further information)

By the mid 1950's, Bill South was on the committee and very active. Keith Uhlmann, who was later to become secretary/treasurer, attended for the first time on behalf of Postal Institute. Otherwise things were quiet locally and the minutes reflect little activity.

In the late 50's, Albert (Bert) Sakzewski, (later Sir Albert) accepted the role of Patron as the start of 7 or 8 years as such. They seem to have been lean years financially for the QABSA. Professional player Len Rahilly, who survived as a snooker player into the 70's, was granted Amateur status on a 10 pound bond for two years. The Assn would retain the amateur status for many years to come.

Social Changes and the 1060's

This certainly was a decade of change. Political, social, traditional family values, opposition to government decisions. Women demanded equal rights and others wanted racial equality and better consideration for the environment. Street marches were the order of the day, notably because of the Vietnam War and conscription. Australia lost a Prime Minister when Harold Hold disappeared whilst swimming in the late 1960's.

However, by reading the scribe's word and while all of this activity was going on around it, the QABSA appeared to plod on, even decelerate in its activities perhaps. As an example, no AGM seems to have been held 1960 and President Klinger was given complete power to act on behalf of Assn. However, things weren't as quiet as the AGM minutes of the times seemed to suggest.

But be aware that in 1959 it organised the Australian Billiards in Brisbane September, 1959, and in the next year Qld Snooker (June); Qld Billiards (July); and World's Open Snooker Championship (sponsored by WD HO Wills). Competitors for this were: Clarke McConaghy (then NZ), Warren Simpson, Frank Harris, Norm Squires, and R Burles.

(No results published unfortunately)

So our forefathers had fallen into line with the rest of Australia and were very active. They held six General and Special General Meetings as well. It explains why no AGM was held. It's a safe bet that President Cec Klinger pulled his weight too.

The 1788 -1949 history period closed thus in the records:


"An Ominous Prediction for Billiards was that Billiard enthusiasts were starting to note a falling off of entries in Championships which was blamed on the domination of a couple of players as well as the high level of entry fees. There also seemed to be an increase in the game of Snooker".

Regrettably, this prophesy was self-fulfilling.

It was recorded in 1962 that no State Billiards representative had been sent to the Nationals for two years and that "Billiards was at a standstill". Similarly, there were no interclub or State Billiards for 2 years in the same period. This would have been a disaster for the fanciers. "Jock" Phillips (Kedron Wavell) made a first appearance in this year.

On a brighter note decidedly, both Mssrs Devon and Klinger were granted well deserved Life Memberships. Cec was still enjoying the game and represented Wynnum RSL in the Derek Law term later. Another well known 70's player, Norm Reiken became Vice President now.

The State Billiards Title was finally reinstated and another National Snooker Tourney was held in Brisbane, in 1963. It was necessary to move the Australian Snooker Champs from the RNA the Qld Irish Assn because of costs. The Qld Representative was decided by a play-off.

<p>Sir Albert (Bert) Sakzewski (1905-1991), accountant, sportsman, off-course betting administrator, and philanthropist, was born on 12 November 1905 at Minden, Queensland, son of Queensland-born parents Otto Theodor Sakzewski, Mathilda, née Neuendorf. Of Prussian store and produce agency, and a the then Lowood Shire Council. It is to billiards while waiting for a haircut at was easily defeated in that first game challenge and was soon beating all amateur billiards champion five times, 1932 with a record break of 206 points, and eight-times winner of the Queensland snooker championships between 1931 and 1940. Placing his accountancy career first, he reluctantly declined an offer to turn professional but served as president of the Queensland and Australian billiards associations. He accepted the position as first Chairman, Qld TAB in 1962.</p>		<p>storekeeper, and his wife Anna Emilie origin, Otto was in partnership in a general founding board member, later chairman, of said that Bert, aged sixteen, was introduced the local barbershop and billiards hall. He but, without hesitation, took up the comers. He went on to become Queensland Australian amateur billiards champion in 1932 with a record break of 206 points, and eight-times winner of the Queensland snooker championships between 1931 and 1940. Placing his accountancy career first, he reluctantly declined an offer to turn professional but served as president of the Queensland and Australian billiards associations. He accepted the position as first Chairman, Qld TAB in 1962.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Official Bio)</p>
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A few months later, At an AGM, the Secretary/Treasurer (Klinger) and the Auditor (Davison) retire after years of valuable service and leave big shoes to fill. No nominations were received or filled and the meeting closed without either. The Special General Meeting called to fix these took place 10 months later when Mr N Lobb agreed to be Treasurer, but still no auditor. This meeting was very well attended, but more problems arose when Albert Sakzewski tendered his resignation as Patron of 7 years, effective at the end of the year. Crisis meeting?

Bill South took on the Presidency, a brave move perhaps? It was resolved to approach the Hon David Nicholson, Speaker of the Qld Legislative Assembly, to act as Patron.

The situation for the QABSA must have been parlous at the time. After years of stability; with key people maintaining positions for long periods; albeit with the Assn's nagging financial pains; with Billiards dead in the water; it would have been turmoil. A "Golden Egg" fundraiser was proposed and investigated, but not adopted.

(Author's Note: Definition not found, possibly "shonky" or not legal)

The 1965 AGM was held at Qld Bookmakers Club, Wharf Street Spring Hill. It was convention for the clubs of the Executive Officers to be so used and almost all previous meetings described herein had taken place at the Commercial Travellers (Elizabeth Street then); Qld Irish Assn Club (Elizabeth Street); and Postal Institute (Elizabeth Street). This practice continued into the '80's.

But the problems didn't end there either. Mr Lobb resigns and is replaced short term, by Pat O'Brien of QIA as Secretary and D Coghill, Treasurer. They last for a term so South takes on the Treasury as well as being President at the next AGM. The cavalry arrives in the form of Ron Coogan, Postal player and PMG employee, at the start of a long and committed term, partnering with Bill South (4 years) and Derek Law (next historical period), for more. Ron takes on the finance department as well from his second year.



(Picture: Ron Coogan at Postal Institute)

Patrons weren't easy to find, either and Hon D Nicholson takes two years to accept. In these days, Vice Patrons were also invited to the cause. They comprised the likes of table makers, businesses or owners, in some cases up to 8 or 9. Some, such as Eric Bourke (Rex Room), George Griffiths (Griffs Billiard Room) and later, Norm Reiken, (Albion Press), attended many meetings. If vice patrons had voting rights is not clear, however. Eric Bourke and George Griffiths also served on the Committee and certainly would have had so then. 1970 personalities Bob Varley, Charlie Thompson, "Spanky" McFarlane, and Ossie Pitman had now made appearances.

Author's Note: For interest sake a Waterside Workers' table was done up at Assn cost in 1965 at a cost of 12 pounds 10 shillings for the cloth, and the cushions cost 13 pounds. (\$275 and \$339 respectively) Affiliation Fees in '66 were \$4, Teams \$1 and Players 30c nightly.

Billiard Rooms

So, while all this was going on for clubs, what about the billiard rooms?

George Griffiths ("Griffs", Ann Street) and Eric Bourke (Bourke's Billiard Parlour, Rex Arcade, Valley) were regular attendees at QABSAs meetings and were friends of the Assn. Readers of the minutes will get the feeling that the rooms had been trying for some time to join Assn activities. In 1966, Griffs Billiard Room actually applied for team entry and was refused affiliation because the public were allowed into the room. Many of the leading players regularly patronised the rooms in any event, but the rooms still could not affiliate or play in fixtures. The pressure for acceptance was building. The Rex (E Bourke) and the Savoy (Derek Jeffrey) Billiard rooms were refused affiliation in the next year. Surely, in the light of things financial, the affiliation and the player fees would have been more than useful?



Bill South

Notably, and deservedly because of the entire trauma, Bill South (above) was made Life Member in 1968. At the very same meeting, the QABSAs withdrew from affiliation with Australian Council, unable to pay the fees required.

But change for the good was coming in the form of Derek Law, head of the drafting section, BHP, Brisbane. 1969 saw Derek Law elected to the Committee, proposed by Ron Coogan (Secty) and seconded Pat O'Brien (Irish Club). Many present (12), including the writer on his first appearance, were not listed in the minutes as being present, for whatever reason. The personal machinations are obscure, as well, but Law, Masonic Club, obviously had some support and something was definitely in the wind. ABSA Disaffiliation was endorsed unanimously on account of the financial situation. A SGM was called for 3 months forward to assess the financial situation and A B and C Grade fixtures endorsed for Mon, Tues, and Wed nights respectively. No Billiards fixtures were being played. Terry Stewart (non-Committee) was asked to assist the Secretary/Treasurer who was quite unwell as it would eventuate, sadly.

For interest sake the full Committee was:

- *Executive:** W South (Pres) R Coogan (Secty/Treas) (both unopposed)
- *Patron:** Hon D Nicholson
- *Vice Presidents:** C Thompson., R Rudd, R Young, W Morell, J Hows, N Reiken, J Marshall, J Lennon, H Atkins, T Scales (maker) H Titcombe, and *C Cations
- Committee:** N Dart, E Hartland, B Carn, T Cronau, C Shipway, R Walker, D Law, J McGuire, C Greig, P Raymond

* For the old greybeards, most of the "names" from the early 70's were there.

* C Cations was a referee of note, but the QABSAs was not involved in any official refereeing scheme

So concludes this era in which many gaps were missing prior to this material being given. The Minute book also contains more meeting notes from the next era, (Derek Law term) and will appear then.

Closure – 1950 to 1970 Period