

SPORT

Portsmouth Dockyard had a wealth of sporting talent within its walls, and its employees were involved in Football, Cricket, Cycling, Athletics, Boxing, Golf, Angling, Archery, Tennis, Bowls, Hockey, Sailing and Shooting. The various Departments, factories and shops in the 'Yard had teams in many different Leagues and Associations in the City in addition to the Dockyard's own Leagues. My memories of these sports are mainly between 1945-1960, although sportsmen employed in the 'Yard later than this period can be recalled.

In the Portsmouth Football Association Leagues in the 1940s were MCD Sports, (Secretary Sid Oliver), Factory Sports (Len Wilson), Coppersmiths Shop Sports (W H Bates), EEM Dept. (J E Dollery), Plumbers Shop (Fred Phillips), Dockyard Universals (D Black), Ship Fitting Dept. (W Shepherd) MED Apps. (R F Denford), Painting Dept. (G Young), EEM Drawing Offices (L Critchett) and Joiners Sports (B Rees). In the Portsmouth Lads' League were EEM Dept. (A Wiseman) and MED Apprentices (J Buckingham), with many 'Dockies' playing for other teams within these Leagues. The Hampshire Football Association also had representatives and referees within their ranks, from the 'Yard. A number of teams were affiliated to the Civil Service Sports Association. The Portsmouth Football Association Hon. Secretary was Mr W O'Brien and the Referees Appointment Secretary was Mr P Faulkner, both were Chargemen of Wood Caulkers.

The Cricket fraternity had their own Dockyard League with three divisions and the League also entered the Lord Mayor's Knockout Competition. The teams in the League were as follows:-

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| Division I | Naval Stores Sports
EEM
SCE (Supt. Civil Engineers)
Boiler Dept.
Wellburns (Welders and Burners)
Painting Dept |
| Division II | Ship Shop
Joiners
Factory Sports
Coppersmiths
Garage Sports (Transport Section) |
| Division III | Pneumatic Plant
Torpedo Department
Plumbers
Smithery Sports
Foundry Sports |

A knock out competition within the League was also held, with the final played on the No. 1 pitch at the Civil Service Sports ground at Hilsea, the League being affiliated to the Civil Service Sports Association. A select Dockyard Cricket League

representative team occasionally played other organisations, including the Portsmouth Supporters Club and the Admiralty Signal and Radar Establishment at Haslemere.

Cyclists in the days before the War included Alf Muggeridge (a Chargeman of Shipwrights) and Bert McGuigan. After the war Paddy Mulally and Dave Fleming were among those prominent in the Sport.

Athletics were well represented, the leading administrator in Portsmouth at that time being Andy Gibbs (Shipfitter) the Hon. Secretary of the Portsmouth Athletic Club but also its athletes included:

Peter Blenkinsopp (Engine Fitter), Clive Nethercott (Joiner), David Gardner (Shipfitter), Gordon Chaffey (Engine fitter), Arnold Bradley (Shipfitter), Alan Keel (Shipwright) and Orien Young (Electrical fitter).

Several of these athletes were successful in major championships and gained National titles. A Portsmouth Dockyard team of sprinters won the Sir Patrick Hastings Challenge Shield at the British Workers Sports Associations Championships when representing the AEU Portsmouth District. The team in 1950 was J Hawker, A A Bradley, J W Chaffey and T D Finnigan, all from the 'Yard. Brother A Gibb was team manager. The event was the One Mile Medley Relay; L Radice an MCD draughtsman won the high jump that year as a member of the ATA.

The Dockyard held its own Sports Meetings before and after World War II and in the 1930s both the Electrical Fitter Apprentices and the Engine Fitter Apprentices were affiliated to the Portsmouth Welfare Association who held an Annual Sports Meeting. In the 1922-23 season the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Athletic Sports attracted competitors from Brighton, Catford, Surrey AC, Hampshire AAC (Southampton) and the Royal Navy. The MCD Drawing Office held its own Sports evenings after work at the Civil Service Sports Ground, Hilsea.

Boxing had several well known exponents of this art including Len Lemaux, Benny Clark, Phil Faithwaite, Billy Streets and Jack Fiford. Needless to say all were very modest gentlemen. Gus Tout, a rivetter, was a trainer who had a gym in Mile End.

The first annual Golf tournament was held at Great Salterns on 24 June 1948. A medal round was played in the morning with the President's Trophy (a handsome shield) won by S H Law (SCE Dept.), MCD's J S Loades being the runner up. The Hon. Secretary's Challenge Cup was presented to L A Cooper. In the afternoon a Points Bogey Competition was won by J S Loades (MCD) who was presented with a handsome silver mug, the Captain's prize. He was followed in by E L Debrulais (EEM) and L A Cooper (MCD).

Angling was, and still is, very popular with Fountain Lake Jetty a favourite spot to fish, for the Dockyard Angling Society members.

Tennis and Bowls both had their own Leagues with the Paint Shop and the Factory enjoying their successes. Both sports held knock out competitions.

I am unsure whether Shooting had a following among Dockyardmen but it is worth recording that Malcolm Cooper, a Constructive Draughtsman, was described as being one of the world's best 3-position marksman with a record of more medals than any competitor in the 1978 Commonwealth Games and three world records. Many of his successes were achieved after he left the Yard.

Other sports, including Swimming, Archery, Rowing, Sailing and Hockey had their devotees. The revival of the Dockyard Establishments Central Sports Association (DECSA) which was sited in Oslow Road, Southsea, saw the introduction of the Indoor Games League.

I have only scratched the surface of sport indulged by the Dockyard employees and this covers only a limited time period, but surely there must be members among the Support Group who have a more detailed knowledge of a particular sport and its personalities covering your period in the 'Yard. Take a minute to jot down a few facts and send them to the Secretary, Mr Mike Roberts. Some of this information was gleaned from the HM Dockyard Sports Gazette in July 1948. More information concerning 'Dockies' in Boxing can be found in 'All Our Yesterdays' and, for Athletes, see the recently published book 'Men's Athletics in Portsmouth 1880-1980', written by and available from Alan Keel (023 9248 4448) at a cost of £25.00.

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