



In the late 19th Century, Peterborough boasted one of the strongest cricket clubs in the province. The above photo shows players on the team in about 1890. Included are P. Cooper, John Stirling, H. Strickland, J.E. Hammond, M. Sandeson, T. Rutherford, C.J. Logan, Max Hamilton, W.A. Stratton, J.H. Long, Sam Ray, Dr. G. Burnham and R.B. Rogers. [Photo courtesy of Trent University Archives and Archie Hamilton]

Cricket club is among the oldest sports groups still operating in Ontario

By COLIN TAYLOR

The Peterborough Cricket Club is one of the oldest sports clubs which is still active in Ontario. It's exact date of founding is unknown, but it was operating from a ground in Ashburnham in the 1850s. By the 1880s it was one of the strongest cricket clubs in the province.

In those early days cricket had a strong following because of high immigration rates from England, the house of the sport; and baseball, of course, had still not been invented. The club was forced to close down during World War One, but revived in 1918 and moved to the exhibition grounds. In 1928 it moved its operation again, to Nicholls Oval.

In 1934 a second club was founded, the Whitaker Cricket Club, associated with the woolen mill. The two clubs eventually merged after World War Two, and entered the Toronto and District Cricket League (as the Peterborough-Whitaker Cricket Club) where it competed successfully with other clubs in southern Ontario.

In the late 1960s the club was forced to withdraw from the league because of a shortage of players, and thereafter has confined its activities to social games.

In recent years, the club has played only a limited number of friendly games on

Saturday or Sunday afternoons. Some are "home" games played at Beavermead Park in Peterborough, but many are "away" games and involve travelling to the grounds of other clubs in such places as Toronto, Ajax, Orillia and Barrie. Annual games are also scheduled with Lakefield College School and Trinity College in Port Hope, where young Canadian players are coached in the skills of the game.

The games are all played in a friendly spirit, and there is invariably a social gathering after the game at the home of one of the players, with ample refreshment (both solid and liquid) available. It is common for whole families to attend both the games and the parties afterwards. The cricket club is very cosmopolitan in composition, with most players immigrants from cricket playing nations such as England, India, Pakistan, New Zealand, Australia, the West Indies and South Africa. There are also some Canadians, who make the switch from baseball with varied success.

Unfortunately, the club is now very short of players and might be forced to close down unless some new recruits can be found. Anyone who is interested in playing, whether experienced or not, should contact either Colin Taylor 652-7346 or 748-1478 or Paul Wilson 745-2859 or 748-1252.