

# *FEILDING MINIATURE RIFLE CLUB*

## **1935 - 1939**

A proposal to form a Miniature Rifle Club in Feilding was well supported at a meeting held on August 13th, 1935.

Mr W Jenkins of the Sandon Club and Secretary of the Manawatu Miniature Rifle Association presided and outlined the workings of the Association. Mr J Millagan of the Awahuri Club also gave details, following which the proposal to form a club was unanimously adopted.

The following were elected to office: Patron, Hon J Cobbe MP, President, Mr R Buchanan, Secretary, Mr K Cossar, and Treasurer, Mr de la Tour. A donation of 500 targets was received from Mr A Marshall, and the Aitken brothers gave the stationery necessary for the club. Donations of £2/2/- (\$4.20) and £1/1/- (\$2.10) were thankfully received.

On October 4th, the Feilding Miniature Rifle Club held its opening meeting, the President extending a welcome to the visitors, and expressed the club's thanks to all those who assisted with its formation. The Mayor (Mr T Collins), congratulated the club and Major J Bartrop, a veteran officer of the old Manchester Rifles, addressing the gathering, stated that the Drill Hall trustees would assist the club in any way possible. For the Manawatu Association, the President, Mr A K Drew wished the young club success.

Shooting then commenced with about 40 members taking part. The best scores registered were shot by riflemen J Craig, L Shailer, S Mayhew, and F Bocking with double possibles.

The club was extremely fortunate in having the largest range in the Manawatu with 8 mounds being available.

1936 saw the Manawatu Championships held in the drill Hall where members of the Aokautere Club were successful in all three grades. A local member, A Gulbransen, finished in second place (B grade) with a score of 230 (possible 240).

Interclub shooting in the first year was not very successful, though the club held the Shailer and Hopcroft Shields for a brief period.

In August 1937, the club visited Sanson where it lodged a successful challenge for the McKelvie Cup, winning by a margin of 17 points. Top scorers for the challengers were W Bray (138), N Rosoman and J Gray (137), and S Mayhew (136). Seven challenges were repulsed before the cup was lost to Sandon in 1938. All in all the club had one of the most outstanding seasons in its short history when it held the McKelvie Cup, Hopcroft Shield, Shailer Shield, and the Collinson Shield, and the MMRA Cup for the B grade teams at the end of the year.

At the 1938 annual meeting, held on April 5th, Mr R Buchanan tendered his resignation as President, and Mr J Craig was elected as the new President. The balance sheet, prepared by G Bramwell (Treasurer), showing a substantial credit balance was adopted.

The thanks of the club were due to all who had given donations and trophies and the appreciation shown of the good and clean recreation provided by miniature rifle shooting. It was decided to open the season the following week.

The club Secretary stated that the club required 30,000 rounds of ammunition to see it through the season, and it was decided to make early application to acquire the same.

Considerable interest in large bore shooting was shown by some members, and a further meeting was held for the purpose of forming a defence rifle club. There was a good attendance and Mr J Craig presided. Mr R Stuart of the neighbouring Cheltenham Club addressed the meeting, giving an outline of the working of such an organisation. It was decided to form a club and an election of officers proceeded to take place. Mr S Mayhew was elected as President, Mr G Bramwell as Secretary and F Bocking as Treasurer. Subs were set at 5/- (50cents). However, records were not available to confirm where or even if any shooting took place by this club.

The Feilding Miniature Rifle Club's new range, which was rumoured to have been situated at the rear of the Manchester hotel, was officially opened by Mr R Buchanan, Vice-President, on July 19th, 1939. Together with Mr F Lumsden, a veteran member of the Sandon Club, the first shots were fired. Mr Buchanan wished the club success on its new range and congratulated it on its initiative in securing premises of its own, which he said would result on more regular practices each week. The first possible was registered by G Bramwell.

The final function concluding the club's season was held on October 25th, 1939 when 30 members attended a social evening. An apology for his absence was received from the Patron, Hon J G Cobbe MP. Many toasts were honoured and a short community sing song was held with Mr E Wilson at the piano. The following trophies were presented: Cobbe Cup and miniature, Mr J Craig: Aggregate Cup, Mr G Bramwell and Mr Craig's B Grade Cup went to G Richardson. The evening finished with a rousing rendition of God Save the King.

Shortly afterwards the Government, under a compulsory order, acquired the club's rifles and associated gear for use in the war effort.

In post-war years, the club made continued effort to find suitable premises but, as these were not forthcoming, the club was forced into recess.

Thus the Feilding Miniature Rifle Club, which had a short history, faded into obscurity.