

Michael (Boysie) O'Connell

Michael (Boysie) O'Connell was born in Bathurst. His father, Michael, formerly a Newnes railwayman, became ill and Boysie had to leave school at 15, to take over his father's small business, delivering goods for Bathurst Railway.

After his father's death, he studied shorthand/typing at the Railway Institute and began work as a pay clerk. He married amazing Vida, a nurse, and they had 9 children, many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Boysie served as an officer in the A.I.F. during WWII.

He was NSW Railways Singles Tennis Champion 7 times and named Number 1 Player for NSW, also excelling in Doubles. At 'Country Week', 1939, Bathurst defeated Newcastle. At a Mayoral Dinner, the first win by a country town was celebrated. Boysie was Bathurst Singles Champion, undefeated from 1933 to 1951 (war years- not held). After an exhibition match against Wimbledon champion, Jack Crawford, Jack stated Boysie had the potential to play Davis Cup and Wimbledon. However, family and Bathurst always came first.

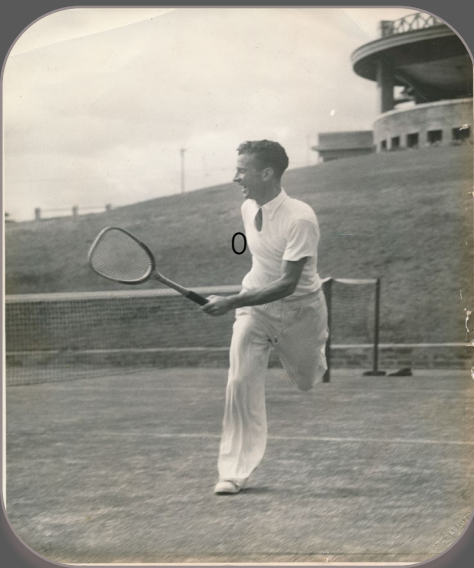
Boysie organised tournaments, coached etc. and displayed particular devotion to the disadvantaged. An Art Union with a car as a prize drew lots of attention! As a tribute to his achievements and contributions, particularly to junior tennis, Bathurst Council has named a street "O'Connell Place". He won many Open Singles titles at Cowra, Lithgow, Mudgee, Portland, Parkes, Forbes, Trundle and Crookwell (Doubles and Mixed Doubles too).

Moving to Young in 1953, Boysie was president of Young Tennis for 19 years. His tournaments were well attended and respected by players such as Evonne Goolagong and Tony Roche. Boysie won the singles at Young 7 times, even triumphant into his fifties!

A NSW Tennis Merit Certificate was recognition of his talents, generously shared with youngsters.

Boysie represented NSW on the Australian Cherry Growers Federation from the inaugural meeting and on the government-appointed Cherry Panel. He was recognised by NSW Cherry Growers "for a lifetime of excellent service and dedication to the expansion and improvement of the cherry industry". Ed Burgi (Victoria) wrote "Boysie was listened to with respect whenever he spoke, whether it was to fellow growers or cabinet ministers ... he was a good man and a good Australian".

At 88, Boysie was still enjoying work every day on his daughter's orchard and winning tennis matches against younger opponents, when he was tragically killed in a farm accident. On his death, NSW Sport Administrator, Tom Pratley, wrote to newspapers that Boysie "was without question, Bathurst's best tennis player ever ... a great administrator, all-round sportsman and a thorough gentleman ... his inspiration and junior tennis organisation made Young and Bathurst incredibly strong tennis centres."



"BOYSIE" O'CONNELL

No. 1 N.S.W. Railways Tennis Player

Following his successes at the Lachlan Valley championships at Cowra, where he won the Lachlan Valley singles championship, and partnered by Eric Humphries, of Lithgow, the doubles championship, "Boysie" O'Connell, the local champion, was notified yesterday that he had been selected as No. 1 player in the N.S.W. Railways team to tour Queensland with a Victorian team. The tour commences on May 15.

This is the second year in succession that "Boysie" has won the singles and doubles championships, and had reached the final of the mixed championship, in which he was partnered by Miss Betty James, of Young, but owing to failing light they decided to toss for the final, and "Boysie" and partner lost to Laurie Cannon, Forbes No. 1 player, and Mrs. Walker, of Orange. Mrs. Walker is the sister of Australia's Davis Cup player, Jack Crawford.

"Boysie" also won a special prize of £3/3, donated by the Cowra Motor Garage.

Evan Rickard, another local representative, also performed with merit, reaching the final of the special singles championship, but this also, was not completed.

Miss Joyce Fitzgerald, partnered by Mrs. Walker, of Orange, won the ladies' doubles championship.

RAILWAY TENNIS

CITY v. COUNTRY MATCH

The majority of the players selected in the city and country teams reached the semi-finals of the various events in the recent railway tournament, and the public of Lithgow is assured of good matches in this year's McDonald Cup contest.

The holder of the railway singles championship, "Boysie" O'Connell, needs no introduction to the Lithgow public. Suffice to say he is the singles champion of Bathurst, Cowra and Portland and, in winning the latter title, defeated prominent metropolitan players. With Jim Turner, he also holds the railways doubles championship.

The "old firm" of Turner and Hickey will this year be separated. These players, who have delighted many Lithgow fans, will be seen in opposition and the outcome of their singles match will be keenly awaited.

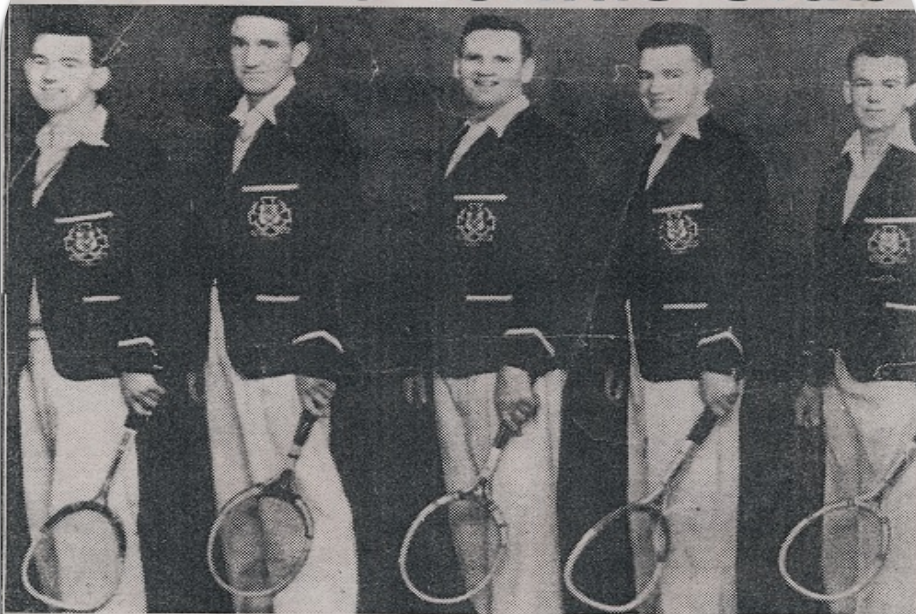
Percy Bungate, a newcomer to

Lithgow, has many fine performances to his credit in the southern districts, and with Pat Hickey won the special railway doubles and was runner-up in the special singles. These two players have been selected to represent Lithgow against Bathurst for the "Leaholme" Cup.

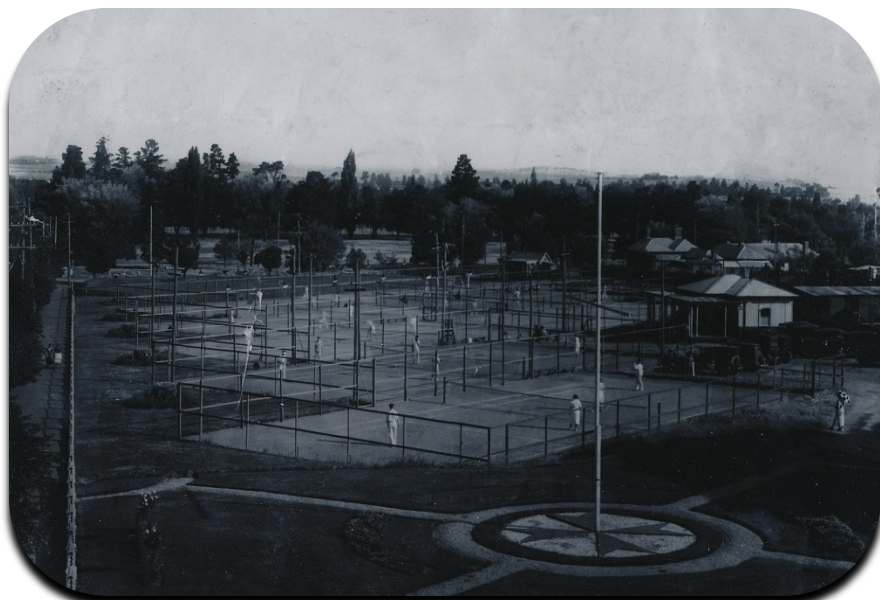
P. Cuskelly is a very solid singles player and has many fine doubles performances to his credit, partnered with Hill. These two city players are pleasing, and the country representatives will be hard pushed to beat them.

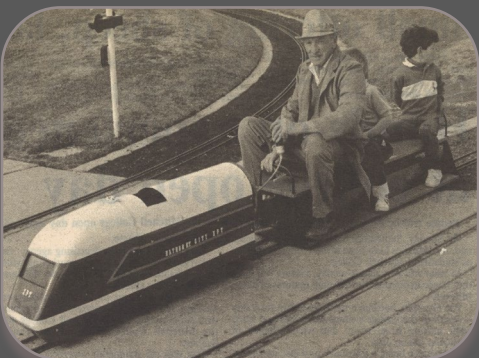
W. Strong, the captain of the city team, is a strong "all-rounder" and his ability has won him inter-state representation for a number of years against Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

St Pat's Tennis Club



Pictured above are the St Patrick's undefeated B.D.T.A. Premiers of 1935 (from left) S.G. Piesley, R.W. Kable, Tom Stone (snr), M.W. (Boysie) O'Connell and Tome Stone (jnr). Absent: Harold Nancarrow. Such was the fame of the team that year that an exhibition match was held between Boysie O'Connell and Wimbledon champion, Jack Crawford as well as between Harold Nancarrow and Harry Hopman.





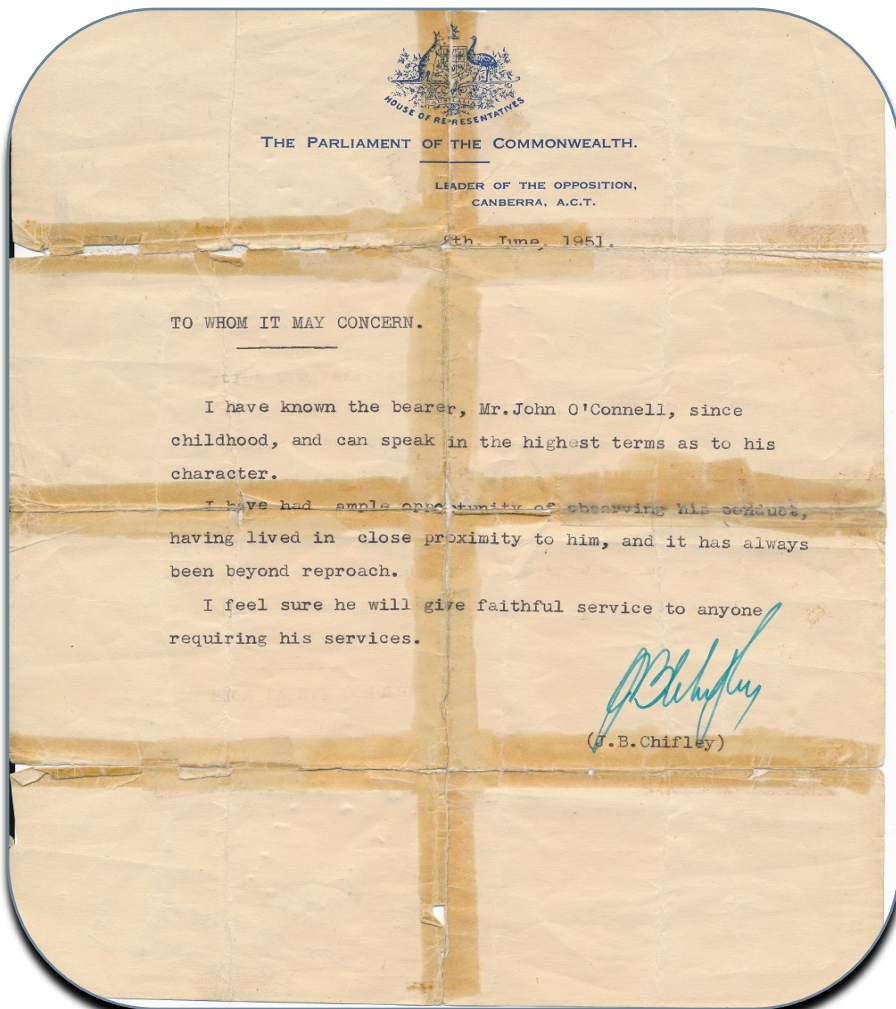
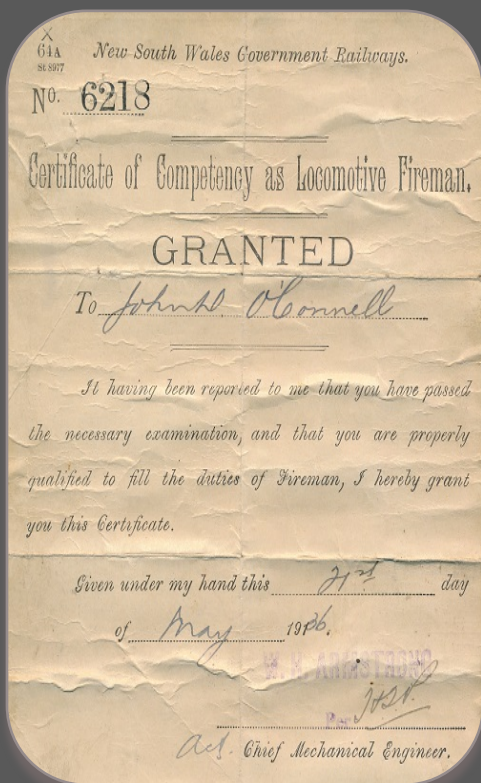
John (Jack) O'Connell

Bathurst Railway 1929 to 1956, as a cleaner, fireman and a driver.

The 'Call Boy' would arrive to wake Jack and hand him instructions for the day. The family's white cockatoo would squawk, "Call Boy Jack". Jack would leave for work with a tin lunchbox on a leather strap.

Jack recalled transporting Japanese prisoners to Cowra and them being fed sandwiches.

Jack left the Railway, buying a Shell garage on the William and Rocket St corner. He was always a gentle, quiet, respectful man, who adored his nieces and nephews. He married a local lady, Alice, at 50.





Kathleen O'Connell

Bathurst Railway 1926 to 1975. A woman of tiny stature, she always walked to work in Bathurst's weather extremes, from the family home in Rocket Street. An intelligent, hard-working, dedicated employee, she ran the extremely busy Goods Office for many years.

Kath never married or had children, but was a loving, generous auntie. She retired at age 66, enjoying community volunteering and spending time in her garden.



O'Connell Family

The O'Connell family greatly appreciates the educational, employment, community and sporting opportunities the NSW Railways provided. These enabled so many individuals, during the difficult, early days of our country, to pursue paths in life that would have otherwise not been possible.

We would also like to acknowledge the women/partners, like Vida, who worked tirelessly at home to support the Railway workers, without the mod cons that are at our fingertips these days.

