

# THE GOVERNOR'S GOAL IN THE BALL GAME

In June 1868 **Football** came to Western Australia.

Our **Pensioner Guards played in the first game** in the early beginnings of the Oval Ball Game.

In that year, a convict ship, the Hougoumont" arrived in the Swan River Colony with 62 Irish prisoners, known as 'Fenians'.

Warders from Britain's prisons together with Pensioner Guards who were 'enrolled' to accompany the prisoners during the voyage. The Pensioners were all retired British Army soldiers who for their services were offered passage for their wives and limited children, and with the promise of a block of land in the new Colony.

Two Companies of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot (Buckinghamshire) were posted to the Colony and they were a recognized fighting and football unit who were not averse to playing the game 'a little rough'.

The Governor of Swan River Colony at the time was John Stephen Hampton and he was nervously aware of the Fenians and their possible activities in his domain. Governor Hampton moved swiftly to secure the services of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment to be available to reinforce the Pensioner Guards in the event of any untoward disturbances.

The first football match played in Western Australia was held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September 1868 on Bishop's Perth Collegiate School grounds, down the hill from the Barracks at Mt. Eliza.

That first game lasted a week; the first goal being scored in the game which lasted until dusk.

The game resumed the following Saturday - the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment scored 2 goals to win the game.

More football games were played between local teams at Fremantle Recreation Ground, the north end of Cliff Street.

Sadly, that was the last football game played in The Colony for some years, as the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot was ordered to another posting.

Football, oval ball or round ball, has since become well established in this State with a friendly rivalry which still exists between the 't'other siders'

*Jean McDonald  
January 2008*

## References:

Geoff Christian, Jack Lee and Bob Messenger. "The Footballers a history of football in Western Australia". St. George Books. Perth. 1985. Ch. 1 and 2.

Steve Errington, "Chasing Leather and Choosing a Code - How Western Australia opted for Australian Rules Football." In "Early Days Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc.) 49 Broadway, Nedlands. Vol 13 Part 1 2007. pp 63-75.

## **Western Australian Times Tuesday 28 March 1876**

### **CITY POLICE COURT INCIDENTS:-**

M. McArdle, for the destruction of a quantity of his household effects, and assaulting his wife and daughters, was, on Saturday last, adjudged forty two days imprisonment. The " gallant son of mars" had been the day previous dismissed the Enrolled Force, because of his proclivity for non-templar principles

*Gay Fielding*

## Research Names:

<http://www.perthdps.com/research/fie01.html>

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~perthdps/convicts/con-wa4.html>