



Writing your club history

How to document your club through the years.

Establishing a written record of your club or association's history can be useful, not only to your club and its members but also to CSSC community, as these histories are often interconnected.

In this short factsheet, we will show you how to document the history of your club or association (hereafter referred to as club in this factsheet) so that you can preserve that valuable knowledge for the future. We also look at the benefits of preserving your history in writing, and have a look at the types of information you need to include.

What's a club history?

This section covers all of the important events and achievements that have occurred over the lifetime of the club. It provides an overview of where the club has come from and the key people involved in creating it. Often histories are written for a major event, such as the 25th, 50th or 100th anniversary of a club's founding.

Why do it?

- For a club, the benefits of having a documented history include:
- Interest and curiosity value for members
- Having a sense of tradition
- Understanding where certain policies or processes came from
- Giving members a sense of belonging to an enduring club
- Generating extra pride in the club
- Generating ideas that may help your club
- Demonstrating longevity to attract members and volunteers

How to do it

Step 1: Set some boundaries

The first step is to clarify the scope of the history to be documented, that is, picking how wide and to what depth the club wants to know about its past. Scoping the project tightly means that it can be broken down into small manageable tasks and this avoids wasting time.

Your club may also need to delegate a person to coordinate the research efforts. This doesn't mean that they will have to do the whole thing – just be in charge of organising the project and assigning tasks where needed.

Areas to consider for research

- When/why was it founded?
- Who was involved at the start of the club?

- What were the names of the first members?
- Are any of the original members or their family members still part of the club?
- How many original members were there, and how many members are there now?
- What did the first membership subscription cost?
- Were there any requirements for becoming a member, and what membership categories existed?
- If appropriate where were the original club facilities located?
- What contests or club championship events were held, and who won them?
- Have club members represented the CSSC or country? If so, who, when, how many times, what events and did they perform?
- What awards or honours have been presented to the club?
- Has there been any royal visits?
- How has the club's activity programme changed and or developed?
- What does the club offer now?

Step 2: Dig for information

The next step is doing the research! You'll need to find as much information as possible about the club over the years. To ensure accuracy, it's a good idea to cross-check and verify this where possible.

Try to find photos or similar as well. As the cliché says, a picture is worth a thousand words and they add interest to your research. In developing this section, your club might use a number of sources:

- Experienced or long-serving club members
- Club honours boards
- Club/committee meeting minutes, documents and archives which can either be found at your own club
- Local/regional CSSC records or CSSC National records

Step 3: Get it on paper

The third step is to get writing! It will take time to craft, but collate all of your research into one place. Create an outline of what areas you are going to cover and then fill in the blanks. Be careful about including sensitive or debateable information-try to stick to the 'facts'. It's also a good idea to get your work edited by a single person at the end of the project so the writing is well structured, readable, and free of grammatical and spelling mistakes.

How do we use our club history?

Release and communicate your work? It would be a shame if you did all that great work and then no-one ever saw it! Show club members what you've found. You might consider a special printed edition for an anniversary event, or uploading onto the club webpage so you can update it over time.

Don't let it gather dust in the back of your club! Potential members and eligible employers may be interested in it if you can demonstrate something interesting or take a unique angle. Free positive publicity is great for attracting members and new members.

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