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Petone

and Harbour Ward

Herald



member

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Empire Table Tennis seals up time capsule

Petone's Empire Table Tennis Club sealed a time capsule into its building on Friday June 25, the climax of its 75th jubilee celebrations.

The club celebrated its jubilee last year and was already underway with collecting items for its time capsule, due to be opened when the club turns 100.

Some 18 months have gone into collecting items for the time capsule, says project leader Arthur Lee.

The items include newspaper clippings, cups, a book on the club's history, photographs and even poems written by club members. Among the news media items in the capsule are stories that have appeared in *The Petone Herald* and the latest issue of the paper.

When *The Petone Herald* went along to see what was going to be placed in the capsule, club member Maureen Crawford gave the club a medal she won in the mixed doubles at the New Zealand Paralympic championships so it could also go in the capsule.

After being sealed into a special cavity in the building, a plaque is to be attached to the outside of this area.

The largest table tennis club in New Zealand with more than 500 members, the Empire has a long and proud history.

The time capsule will not be placed in a sugar bag, but in a metal capsule, thanks to sup-

port from Petone-based Acme Engineering.

The club's story began in 1930 when a number of enthusiastic young Petone and Lower Hutt teenagers formed a cricket club and needed to decide on a name to affiliate to the Hutt Valley Cricket Association.

At the time, their cricket gear was carried in an oversize sugar bag. The word "Empire" was prominent on the sack, and the players selected it as the name of the cricket club.

The members were keen to stay together during the winter months so table tennis became part of the cricket club's activities. The table tennis section had been in operation for two years when the members learned of a meeting on May 1 1934 to form a Hutt Valley Table Tennis sub-Association of the Wellington Table Tennis Association (which had been formed in 1933.)

At a subsequent meeting of the new Hutt Valley Table Tennis sub-Association held on 10 July 1934, an application for affiliation from the Empire Table Tennis Club was received and accepted, which then became a completely separate entity from the cricket club.

Well known Petone resident and *Evening Post* journalist Alf Harding was the club's founder. He maintained a very active interest in the club until ill health forced his retirement in 1997. He died in January 2000 aged 86.



Maureen Crawford hands the medal she won to Ron Menchi, who has been a member of the Empire Table Tennis Club since 1948.