

The St Peter's Physical Training Club – The SPPTC- the PT Club

The PT Club was founded by Chief Petty Officer Arthur Welch RN ... [he] lived at Bay View on the inside curve of lower Front Hill, right beneath the matt-backed, gothic gaze of the three stained glass windows that graced the back wall of St Peter's Church.

For boys aged five to fifteen, the PT Club met once a week in the hall of the Church Rooms. Although it was indelibly with St Peter's Church, Methodist Chapel boys were equally welcome to bridge the great religious divide and come along as members. Boys who were Catholics or agnostics, or for that matter atheists, would also not be turned away ... they were rare beasts.

... The function of the PT Club was to develop teamwork and community spirit to replace the rough and ready ragged-assed individualism that characterised the boys and their usual run of activities. ... CPO Arthur always encouraged the boys to do their best. ... His pet hate was any owner of what he referred to as a 'delay action brain'. When he said 'Jump!' he meant, 'Jump now!' So the boys jumped now.

... As the fame of the PT Club grew, some members of the St Peter's Mothers' Union, under the imperial direction of the aptly named Mrs Angell, designed and embroidered a set of distinctive PT club badges consisting of the letters SPPTC interwoven in pale blue thread on a pale blue edged shield. The badges were sewn onto the boys' white vests, right in the centre of the breast.

