

Wymeswold

Memorial Hall

Bowls Club

History of the Club.

In the Beginning.

In 1935 a meeting was held at the Three Crowns Inn Wymeswold to decide if a Bowls Club could be formed. The committee consisted of:-

J.G James.....R.W.Hames.....W.Taylor(Sen).....C.Mills....

G.Basford.....T.Brown.....J.Burrows..... Rev. C.Bourchier... J.Smith H.Savage.....A.Towle.

They discussed using part of the cricket ground to the rear of the pub, re-laying part of the turf. but after a series of meetings, discovered that the Memorial Hall were also thinking of forming a Bowls Club to the rear of the Hall. This resulted in a meeting being called at the Memorial Hall with the trustees, where a formal proposal was made.

May 25th 1936.

The meeting took place regarding forming a Bowls Club and laying out a ground to the rear of the hall. Correspondence respecting enquiries for tenders for laying out a Bowling Green were discussed, and En Tout Cas, Barrons Ltd, Pickerings & Bradshaw Bros. were asked to tender.

June 15th 1936.

Meeting to discuss Tenders, which were:-

En Tout Cas.....£499-0-0

Barrons Ltd.....£462-0-0

Pickerings.....£377-6-6

Bradshaw Bros...£284-0-0

It was agreed that Messrs Bradshaw Bros tender should be accepted.

A bank loan was arranged with the Westminster Bank at a special interest rate of 4%, and by February of 1937, £150 had been paid off Bradshaws account.

March 9th 1937.

Membership Fees of 12/6 for men and 6/- for ladies were agreed

A pavillion was bought from a cousin of Peggy Mills and Edward Emmerson at Cotes for £15. In April a hand Lawn Mower was bought for £5. Mr Highton agreed to be groundsman at £10 for the first year, but because of the manually operated mower, was offered an extra £1.

May 20th 1937.

The ground was opened by the President Mr L.E.Weldon, and a team from Queens Park were the visitors.

November 1st 1937.

Gents £1-5-0, (£1.25p) and Ladies 15/-, (75p) our bank balance was £53-1-6 (£53.7½ p) in the bank.

In November of this year the club officially joined the Leicestershire E.B.A. the club members finding their own Capitation fees of 1/- (5p). Mr J. Banks was appointed Groundsman at an annual fee of £30. But in 1952 when the club bought a Webb electric mower and asked him to accept a fee of £25, he resigned. Despite advertising for a part time groundsman, the position was not filled, and members undertook to do the work themselves on a voluntary basis. In 1954 new Rubber Mats were obtained from "Players", were these the same mats we used in 1999. ?

In January 1955 the first of the Dinners and Suppers held in various venues took place at the Packe Arms at Hoton, the Echo photographer was there to take pictures of the members and Cup Winners. One more "Annual Event"

Throughout the minutes there is the same recurring plea, "we need more members" and several years have seen serious shortages of members that "prevented entry in competitions". And, concerns for the level of the green, in fact in 1958 the estimate of £37-10-0 (£37.50) by En Tout Cas to level the green at each end was accepted. There was also a concerted effort to attract new members, this must have been successful because the early '60's show a number of entries in the various county competitions.

In 1961 subscriptions were raised to 35/- (£1.75p) for men and £1 for Ladies, this was the year that the death of Mr John James was recorded, a long serving member of the club. The middle sixties also saw the sad losses of Mr A. Towle (1965) and Mr Sidney Smith (1966) (Neil Smith's husband) there was also another membership crisis. In November 1965 a special meeting was called to consider whether, with the present membership, the club could continue. Happily for us it did

A New Pavillion.

In 1970 after planning permission had been granted, the club bought Wymeswold Football Club's pavillion for £10, the Bowls Club dismantled and re-erected it at the green. It was also evident that the green was in urgent need of levelling, and the quote of £1365.00 from En Tout Cas was beyond the means of the club. The then secretary, produced a quote obtained by Mr Copley from Mr John Colkington to level the one rink for a sum of £54, this quote was accepted.

Dress.

In 1972 as other clubs playing against Wymeswold were wearing "Creams" it was resolved that Wymeswold should wear Creams on Saturday's and special occasions. Whether this change was the reason for it is doubtful, but Wymeswold won the "Corson Shield" for the first time, and John and Ken Parr with Warner Wootten reached the semi-finals of the County Triples Competition. In 1974 subscriptions were raised to £3, and again in 1975 to £4. Mr Eric Dilks organised a series of dances and whist drives to such good effect, that in 1976 he had raised over £300, this enabled the club to do more extensive work on the green.

1976 saw Wymeswold winning the Corson Shield again, and yet once again the non completion of competitions was brought up. Mr Les Smith offered his services as Competitions Secretary, and strict rules were drawn up to ensure this did not happen again.

Inflation meant subscriptions rising to £5 in 1979. I am indebted to the Jubilee Book on Wymeswold Bowls Club for a number of recorded entries. This one I thought worth mentioning once again, "At the A.G.M. of 1979, Mr Ron Crust who had worked so hard on the refurbishment of the green, was offered £150 in appreciation of his services. He declined, saying he would prefer such money to be spent on the green". Subsequently he was presented with a bowls bag as an acknowledgement. He is still at this moment giving his services looking after the green in the interim period before the "new green" is officially opened, another thing that doesn't change.

Mixed Club.

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Goodbye to the old Green

1999 saw us playing our last matches on the 63 year old green, and after all the club matches, and competition matches had been completed, a few members held a symbolic last "roll-up". Some of our "hallowed" turf was bought by the Loughborough "Grasby Bowls Club" to lay on their rink, (so it could not have been that bad) and we could the following season claim to be playing on "our home ground" when we visited.

Project 2000 begins.

The project began in March 2000, when the entrance to the new car park and land levelling for the Hall extension were excavated. Two days after work began, the heavens opened, and the site could have been mistaken for a new Olympic size swimming pool. Those who didn't know how Clay Street got its name, were left in no doubt. The site after a few days resembled a quagmire, and the dumper trucks could not be used to remove the debris, so it was left to the digger driver to complete the "large hole". As "Swallow Hall" had now been consigned to the skip, the equipment shed, with Swallow Hall padlock, was sited on what had been the children's play area. This became the focal point, the "availability" sheets, and the "selected" sheets were placed inside for members to sign and tick, and to view the progress, or sometimes, what seemed to be a lack of progress. As members also met outside the Hall, all our matches now being "away" it became habit to walk up the jetty and have a extra look.

On the 23rd May the main drains and the water pipes for the services were begun, but it was when the drainage for the green itself started in early June that things began to take shape. Later in June when the large gravel, and then the Gulleys were laid, it showed just how much bigger the new green was over the old.

In July the Gulleys were completed except for a small section needed as an access for the bringing in of small gravel first and then the loam soil. We saw the sprinkler system laid, the gulleys covered in the "artificial" grass, which added a welcome new colour to the scene. The water tank close to the signing on hut gave a different look to the skyline, and finally in early September, the turf was laid, and at last we could view our new playing area.

Also in September work was started on the new equipment store, and then soon after, the work began on the Hall extensions. At the time of writing this, the equipment store is being "fitted out", and the Hall extensions are nearly complete, and the most important date on the calendar is June 2nd 2001, when the new green is due to be opened.

The history of the club would not be complete without a word about its officials. The clubs success can often be measured by the enthusiasm of its official representatives. Wymeswold has always been fortunate with its "committee". People who very often give more time and money doing the job, than is realized, but do the job for love of the club. President, Secretary and Treasurer head the list because they are the most visible, and the most handy when things are not quite right. The Captains, who juggle the availability lists, in order to satisfy the needs of the club, and the aspirations of the members, and who so often have to spend time phoning around asking for help in completing a team. The Greenkeeper, without whose expertise and commitment, our game would not take place. And lastly, the members who assist in the running of the behind the scenes, helping on the green, the transporting of the members to away fixtures, and helping the "Tea Ladies" who over the years, have done so much to give Wymeswold its name. Long may all this continue.

This account of the club was prepared in 2000 by John Chesterton, at the time of the moving of the green and building of an enlarged clubhouse.

This is copy of a print out given to David Marshall by John Chesterton and canned by Richard Ellison. Published as a PDF January 2022.