



*A History of
Ash Bowls Club*

1911-2011

The First Hundred Years

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Introduction

As part of the Ash Bowls Club Centenary celebrations, I thought it would be a nice tribute to many of those who have been an integral part of creating our club and moulding it into what it is today by putting together a short history.

Obviously dates, people and places are important, but rather than me just simply making a list of dates accounting the trophies, winners and their achievements, I thought it would be more interesting to take a look at the real people and their stories. So, I've purposely tried to include some of the lighter moments and recounting memories of not only mine, but those who have also been part of the club for many years.

So, I sincerely hope you enjoy reading this history, as much as I have putting it together.

Plans in the Making

June 1st 1910, at the Lion Inn Ash. The first ever general meeting of Ash Bowling club was held on the 1st June 1910 when the following officers and committee were appointed; Chairman Mr A Holness; Hon Treasurer Mr H E Crawford; Hon Secretary Mr W.G. Vinning; Committee; Messrs C Harden, W Beer, W Strachen, J Ayling, and H Brisley.

It was proposed by Mr C Crawford, seconded by Mr Oliver that Mr A G Gardener be invited to accept the office of President of the club; decision - carried unanimously.

This was the first committee to serve Ash Bowls Club.

All members carried out their duties extremely well; these original pioneers of our club had ambition, high hopes and deep pockets, which they had to dig into on many occasions to help establish the fledgling bowling club of their dreams and ambitions. The determined group proved themselves to be skilled business men with the ability to barter when necessary.

Mr A H Holness agreed to accept the position of chairman "For one year ONLY" but he was still shown as chairman fifteen years later in 1925.

Noted at one of the weekly Committee Meetings held at the Lion Inn Ash; On June 6th 1910, a deputation from the Cricket Club attended to discuss the sale of their pavilion and mowing machine for £5.

It was proposed by Mr W Beer, seconded by Mr Horden that £4- 10-0d be offered to the cricket club for both pavilion and mowing machine taking the mowing machine on provisional approval! However at the 13th June committee meeting information had been received that the cricket club was not prepared to accept less than £5.

In 1910, when the original membership fee of 5/- and the annual subscription of 5/ was introduced for the first 40 members, the agricultural wage was 13/4d.

On the 13th June 1910 the committee drew up a set of rules for Ash Bowling Club which were presented and passed at the AGM on Tuesday 21st June at the Lion Inn at 7.30pm.

These appear to have been amended in April 1926 when William Godsell was Hon secretary.

Getting Connected

Many of the amenities that are taken for granted today; watering facilities for the green had to be organised and this was subsidised by a loan from Mr Ayling who had to wait several years for the repayment of his loan to the club.

Electricity wasn't connected until the 1970's which may not have been too much of a problem as bowls matches were normally played during daylight.

Invitations were being accepted to play matches against other teams including Eastry, Upper Deal, Sandwich and Worth.

Whist Drive

The first fund raising Whist-drive held on 19th December 1910 realised a profit of £4-12-0d. A second Whist-drive held on 10th January 1911 sold 100 tickets of admission. A whist drive committee was appointed to organise three whist drives per month including food and refreshments. Apart from Mr Beer the MC the identities of the whist-drive committee are not recorded.

However, noted in the minutes of a committee meeting 26th April 1911 - that the whist-drive committee would be invited to the official opening of the green - each member was to be allowed to bring along two friends.

For several years the whist-drives generally proved to be good fund raisers but attendance depended a great deal upon the weather. At a general meeting 25th January 1921 it was noted that following a storm, the whist-drive appeared to have lost money. Each member was asked to subscribe 5/- towards cost of expenses. A subsequent proposal was adopted, and it was decided that each committee member would make a voluntary contribution to offset the cost.

Tuesday June 6th, 1911 – 2.30pm

This was the date and time of the official opening of Ash Bowling Club.

The event was seen as a very prestigious affair (as the photograph from the wall of the present clubhouse clearly illustrates): Not only were the gentlemen members smartly dressed, but also their ladies are seen wearing their finest hats and gowns are included in the group picture which was taken to record the occasion.



At first glance by 2011 standards the absence of lady bowlers may appear chauvinistic but on reflection of a woman's role prior to Emily Pankhurst and the number of children per family, they probably didn't have had either the time or the energy left to play bowls. Conditions for ladies in all walks of life changed considerably during the First World War and thanks to Marie Stopes pioneering family planning clinics resulted in less children this is possibly when ladies began to play bowls.

Bicycles can be seen against the fence in some of the early photographs of the players and was probably the main means of transport to and from match venue's.



Transporting their woods to matches must have proved quite daunting on their bicycles over some of the country roads.

As with most sports the game of bowls can be a great leveller, as players from all walks of life can compete against each other on even terms, which has been reflected in the membership of Ash Bowls Club.

In 1930 a Captain Lister opened the Green in the absence of the president Sir Reginald Towers, who is remembered by his donation to the club of the silver rose bowl. Other titled names and clergymen are mentioned in the minutes including

Reverend F Turner

The Rev F Turner is mentioned many times in the minute book. In 1951 he was elected Vice President. He appears to have contributed a great deal of enthusiasm and time to the club, in particular his competition organising skills. The most well known one being the St Dunstan Shield; In 1957 he was unable to continue organising tournaments due to pressure of work, although he did continue to play. He was one of the players in the winning team of the St Dunstan's Shield in 1958. Mrs Julie Farbrace her sister Ann and brother in law Frank Chapman have provided a photograph (see over) of one of the successful teams that competed in the tournament which included Harry Birch (club badge) Harry Hyde and the Rev Turner. Seated in front of them is Harry Burvill who had been the greens keeper. Their Uncle Len Martin is shown holding the St Dunstan's Shield. Both Harry and Len were club trophy and medal winners as recently as 1963. Other Teams participating in the St Dunstans Shield Competition which was a charity in aid of ex-service men blinded during the war were West Marsh, Woodnesborough,

Littlebourne, Ash, Eastry and Canterbury. As Ash was the last team to win the shield it remains on display in the clubhouse.

With the assistance of the Rev John Sweatman from St Nicholas Church we were able to track down someone who not only remembered Rev Turner as Minister of the U R Church but who's father had worked for him as a gardener - Ruby Byrne!



Ladies Please

It was during the early 1950s The Rev. Turner took Ruby and three other ladies; Vi Spinner, Kath Barham and Mrs E Ross the policeman's wife to play a ladies game for Ash at Eastry; this was the first Ash Ladies team although the ladies had played in mixed matches with the men for some time previously.

All the ladies owned their own bowls - probably lignoid or possibly Thomas Taylor or Henselite; the Henselite composite bowl was invented and first manufactured in 1930 by Jack Hensel in Melbourne Australia.

Not to be found in any of the minutes - Ruby's recollection of when her husband Bob was captain; how he cut a round hole in a piece of wood to place over the bucket in the hut used by ladies needing to spend a penny. The weekly visits from the 'Lavender cart' can be remembered but certainly not missed.

Bob Byrne was also responsible for retrieving the Workhouse authoritarian bell that now hangs at the entrance to the main door of the club- house. The plaque situated beneath it records the history of the bell, which is now used at the start of play for matches, by competition time-keepers and tea ladies as a signal to the players 'To come and eat'

According to the honours board Ruby first became Ladies President in 1996. With the exception of two years 2005 –2006 when Janet Norris stepped in. Ruby remained the lady's choice, certainly until 2010. A delightful and much loved lady, an accomplished bowler and holder of a Kent County Badge - Ruby gave me an excellent tip to try at the start of each outdoor season: Three quarters fill a small jug with water, practise swinging arm back and forth as high as possible without spilling water-worth a try!

The Chequers Inn

Up until the early part of the 1900's most bowling 'greens' were situated behind Inns 'public house's' so it seems appropriate that most of the club and committee meetings were held in them. In particular The Chequers Inn featured a big part in the clubs social activities. In 1913 and 1914, 50 fixture cards were printed suggesting an increase in membership.

First World War

In 1915, despite compulsory conscription for all men over the age of 19 and

under 50 years for military service, a green keeper was still employed, although each club member was allocated a week each for watering the green. Members were again asked to contribute towards the repaying of water debt. Some matches were being played. Events continued in much the same pattern during 1916 until the closing match on Tuesday afternoon September 28th. May 1st 1917 opening of the green postponed indefinitely 'Due to present conditions' undoubtedly a reference to the continuation of the First World War. The green closed for two seasons reopened for play May 27th 1919. At a General Meeting 6th March 1919 the Secretary reported that he had paid the remaining money owing to Mr Ayling for the laying of the water. 1919 proved to be a busy time for the committee not only organising and supplying the funding for the purchase of a 'hut' costing £12 (later referred to as the cabin). The Chairman Mr A Y Holness reported that he had purchased 8 sets of bowls for the Club for £2.

Transport to Games

On the 18th May 1926 moving with the times a 31 passenger coach was hired from the East Kent Road Car Company for a trip to Hythe at a cost of £6-0-8d. There are no details of cost to individuals. However by 1952 a charge of 2/6d per passenger was being made.

On the 22nd April 1954 reference is also made regarding chartering coach's for away games and charging members and friends 2/6d each.

By June 1964 it appears public transport was being used by players travelling to games. Mrs Cornell from Barham bowls club apologised for a match being cancelled 'after bus failed to arrive on time'. Details of East Kent bus timetable sent to Barham club in effort to resolve matters once and for all. On 8th June 1967 a proposal that games should stop halfway through, in order to walk down to the Chequers Inn for refreshment was unanimously voted unacceptable to the committee. In recent years former Landlord Bill Wayman has been Chairman and in 1986 President of Ash Bowling Club.

Club Blazer Badge

The Ash Bowls Club blazer badge was designed by Harry Birch, a member of the club, local tailor and postman. He also altered John Castle's demob suit.

The Castle Family

AGM December 10th 1974 John Castle won new beginners prize his wife Pat runner up, they both received a cheque for £7-0-0d. Since then they have both gained notoriety as keen competitors and between them have won a prolific number of bowling trophies. John was elected captain the same year. Later he was able to put his competitive experience to good use by organising many of the club competitions. He followed in his sister Doreen Underhill footsteps and held the office of treasurer for twenty five years until 2008. Pat also served as a member of the committee. John already held a Kent County Badge when he played in the triple team that led to 16 year old Andrew Smith successfully gaining his Kent County Badge in 1996. Shortly after his Mother Margaret Smith his mentor and former ladies captains death.

The other member of that successful triple gaining his County Badge who

went on to represent Kent in the All England Championships at Worthing with them was John's younger brother Ted Castle. During the game John recalls hearing an increase in applause from the spectators, glancing around to see who was clapping he was delighted to see that a 'coach load' of Ash club members had secretly travelled down to support them.



Ted and his wife Phyl took over the organising and running of 'Monday Club' for several years after the untimely death of Fred Wallis. Although originally the suggestion and idea of Tom Wildish, Fred contributed a great deal to the initial success of Monday Club. Brenda and Bob Castle were both elected as ladies and men's captains. Bob as a qualified electrician has done a lot of invaluable work for the club. It was Bob (who is referred to as Robert) by his sister Doreen in her recorded minutes, who in 1975 completely wired the wooden Club house which had been generously donated by a Mr Bert Jones in the late 1960's after a substantial win on the 'Football pools'. Brenda served as club secretary for 8½ years.

April 27th 1919 - Vi & Eric Spinner

Mr E Spinner applied to join the club Mrs Mary Whittaker believes that it was probably her Grandfather, father of Vi's husband Eric. Up until Vi's death in 2010 the name Spinner had strong links with Ash Bowling Club. Eric and Vi were both keen bowlers and committee members. Eric Spinner and Arthur Holman played in the first County game a pairs match at Ash.

Vi was the first ladies Captain and at one time Vice President. A few days after Eric's sudden death in 1981 Vi walked down to the green for a 'Roll up', explaining that she felt closer to Eric when playing bowls as the club had played such an important part in their lives and had meant a great deal to Eric.

Few people realised that Eric had a false ear. As he was cycling towards the club one morning he passed teenager Sue Castle who saw his ear fall into the road. Unaware of his missing ear now lying in the path of possible traffic Eric continued his journey, fortunately Sue was able to attract his attention by shouting after him "Hey Eric



your ear's here!"

David Harris can remember how Eric would round up the lads who were having a drink in the Chequers on a Saturday night and delegate them to help roll the green on Sunday mornings. Dave recalls 'rolling the green' long before he even joined the club. September 1975 Vi Spinner was ladies captain when the first Ladies v Gentlemen's match was played. Vi and Eric's son 'Rob' Spinner joined the club in 1982 when he was working in Dover; he can be seen masquerading as Will Scarlett on the 'Bowling Spectacular' photographs.



I'm a Lady....

In 1986 Margaret Smiths ladies team sheet for the annual game was sadly lacking in names; When four unknown players names were added to the list they were as follows; Wilamina Maddocks; Maureen Knight; Petra Gibson and Davina Philpot

alias PC Will Maddocks, PC Maurice Knight, PC Peter Gibson & Mr David Philpot; Four of the most grotesque looking females ever to set foot on the bowling green. With hairy knees, 50 inch boobs (balloons} which squeaked every time they delivered a bowl. A passing cyclist literally fell off his bike in astonishment! No one on the green could remember either the score or result of the game they were too busy laughing. Peter (Taffy) Gibson has fond memories of his first introduction to the game of bowls. One evening he was told to report at 6pm at Herne Bay Bowls Club



wearing a pair of plimsolls as the police bowls team were short of players for the game against Ash Bowls Club. Peter who had never even held a bowl before that evening thoroughly enjoyed the game and met some wonderful people from Ash Club, including the lady's he played against Pauline Philpot and Vi Spinner. The following day he bought a set bowls and applied to join Ash Bowls Club. The following year Dave Harris and Richard Arnold joined in the fun, this time dressing up as serving wenches to wait on the ladies at tea time in costumes loaned from 'The Rose' at Wickambreux.

Since then Ash Bowling Clubs has seen players appear in medieval costumes

- Bowling through the ages - September 19th 1982, which was the Bowls clubs contribution to the Village of Ash's Centenary celebrations. A photograph recording the occasion can be seen on the wall of the clubhouse. The names of the members in that photograph are recorded on the back of the photograph.



Doreen Underhill

Doreen Underhill (nee Castle) married to Bunny Underhill Men's captain. A formidable opponent on the green giving 'no quarter' and expecting none in return this really belied the fun loving, hard working and extremely loyal member of Ash Bowls Club who was Doreen. As a member of the committee she was both secretary and treasurer for many years. Her cheeky grin so typical of her can be seen in two photographs. In the first one showing off her Victorian bloomers and in a second picture on the wall in the clubhouse she is seated, smiling with delight at being a member of the team. Doreen died after a battle with cancer in 1983. The Doreen Underhill Annual Tournament is played in her memory. It was a case of 'tears all round' in 2007 when Doreen's younger sister Bertha Castle after many years of playing in the tournament won the trophy for the first time. The other members of the winning team were Marie Maddocks and Barbara Macted.

Fourth Rink

The Fourth Rink was laid in November 1983 by Wener & Longstaffe at a cost of £1605 plus V A T. At the edge of the new rink grew a row of beautiful roses, many players including Peter Gibson can recall how the bowls found their way into the border and cursed the bowls when they stopped to 'smell the roses'.

Affiliation

One of the most bizarre situations ever to effect the club occurred when the club wished to become affiliated to KCBA & EBA in 1981; The ladies and gents

had to apply to separate 'governing bodies'. Resulting in Rinks 1- 2 -3 passed - rink 4 however was not accepted. This was for men only. Recorded in Minutes; 11th September 1980 'Thelma Clemmy of Victoria Park had written a letter of recommendation and would be present at the next meeting of the KCWA when our application came forward and would recommend us.' She did intimate that our green may not be suitable for County matches due to not being able to turn it round.

The green sadly however did not reach the County standard required by the ladies green inspectors. What made the situation even more ridiculous was the fact that the previous inspectors for the men had been complimentary on the available facilities.

This resulted in the three ladies who applied to play County games had to use neutral greens.

At the AGM held on 2nd February 1984 Mrs Ruby Byrne asked if the club might be able to apply to the CBA to play County Matches at Ash for Ladies.

Subscriptions increased appropriately to £5 to cover the affiliation fees.

Colin Marsh

The Ash Bowling Club AGM 7th February 1985 - in the absence of the Captain his report was given by Chris Richardson. He said that the club had won more games than they had lost and that Colin Marsh had captained some really excellent games. He had always been a keen and cheerful member and Captain he would be sorely missed for a long time to come.

Before I had any interest or inclination of ever taking up bowls in 1979, I often used to go and watch my husband - Will play bowls in the evenings after I had finished work. As a non-bowler I was passing the time sitting in the car knitting while the men's teams prepared for their game. Suddenly the car door was opened by a man wearing a big smile saying "Come on girl we need you!" Taken completely by surprise, I could only imagine they needed help in the kitchen preparing tea but I was totally wrong! Even though I had never delivered a bowl in my life, Colin somehow persuaded me that they needed me to play. I have no recollection of who's shoe's I wore during that game but inscribed for ever on my memory is Colin's classic bowling instruction of "You send them down girl and I'll knock them in".

Memorial Cup

In 2009 on the 25th anniversary of the introduction of the Colin Marsh Memorial Cup, everyone in the club was delighted when Colin's daughter Shirley Harris achieved her dream of winning the trophy she had donated in memory of her dad. The other members of the winning triple were Arthur Skinner and Marie Maddocks.



The Philpot Family

According to the 1992 Minutes – “Dave Philpot can be seen working on the green virtually every moment he isn't at work. Always a gentleman and diplomat he was called on many times to resolve problems resulting from the over zealousness of other people”. Dave worked at Dover Harbour where in 1980 he was able to purchase a shed that was surplus to requirements for £60 from Townsend Thorreson. Charlie Hooper helped Dave to dismantle the shed at Dover, and local farmer and club member Tom Coleman kindly loaned the use of a tractor and trailer which Tom's son Michael drove to the harbour. With other club members aboard they set off to collect the shed and transport it back to Ash. Even with the combined assistance of Dave's son Robert and Charlie Hooper the task of reassembling the shed was almost proving impossible, as Dave remembers “pieces of wall falling down all over the place”, but help was at hand. “Ron Goldfinch arrived and saved the day”. As a qualified carpenter Ron had the ability to quickly organise the rebuilding of the shed, which when completed served as changing rooms for over twenty five years.

Pauline and Dave were both excellent bowlers and their two young sons Robert and Steve (Curly) could often be found at the club; both had the potential to become good bowlers. An interesting and amusing interpretation of bowling dress came from 9 year old Steve: “For evening games men wear grey because



sometimes they have to go to matches straight from work and don't have much time to change but on Sundays they have plenty of time to get ready so they wear white”. ‘Some people are born great, others achieve greatness while others have greatness thrust upon them’ One of Pauline's favourite quotations after a successful game of bowls. Pauline was the clubs first ‘Welfare Officer’. Sadly Pauline Philpot died in 1996 as a result of Leukaemia. Pauline Philpot standing on the mat is shown in Edwardian dress at the celebration of Ash Village Centenary.

Dress Regulations

Casual dress for Roll up's etc was quite acceptable until the 1980's, when presumably following a directive from the KC BA. White tops and grey skirts for ladies, grey trousers became required dress for all inter club bowling events. Trousers for ladies were not permitted unless for medical reasons. No shorts under any circumstances. By 2005/6 the regulation concerning ladies trousers/hats and gloves for County Games relaxed, now each season sees an increasing number of ladies wearing trousers when playing bowls.

Fred Wallis

On 6th June 1989 Fred and Hazel Wallis applied to join club.

At the AGM on 26th November of the same year Fred was elected club secretary. Although a member for a comparative short time he was the right man at the right time he was determined that Ash bowls club would have a new clubhouse. Thanks to his hard work and business acumen this was built in 1995/96 at a cost of £72,286 by Syd Castle the local builder.

Lottery Help

Funded mainly by the National lottery the money was raised as follows; Sports and Art Foundation £1500 Jack Foat Trust £7,500 Kingsland Trust £7,500: National Lottery £40,286: Club Funds £6,000: Total £76,286.

The clubhouse was officially opened by the Bowls President of Kent Mr Arthur Hockley on 30th June 1996. Amongst the other photographs recording this important day in the clubs history can be found a photograph of all who attended the celebration of the 'Handing over of the Lottery Grant' TSB cheque by a lady official, photograph on the clubhouse wall. Almost all of the names of every one present on that day should be noted on the back of that picture. Fred Wallis died suddenly of a heart attack in 1997.

The Fifth Rink

The Fifth rink had been added in 1991 by J Randall of Portslade East Sussex at an approximate cost of £11650.13p

Ash Men's Team

1991 was the same year as Ash men's team gained runners up in the HB ANNAND Double Fours Trophy. In 2003 they achieved third place. In 2007 they were well deserved winners of the HB ANNAND Trophy and most prestigious competition. Ash Bowling Club joined the Dover League in 1984.

The Ash men's teams have gained respect as worthy opponents who always act as the best of sportsmen whether playing in the Dover League games. Or by endeavouring to support other local clubs by competing in their tournaments, as pairs, triples or fours frequently winning the top prize and trophies.



Short Mat Bowls

A condition of the lottery funding stipulated that short mat bowling should be included in the clubhouse activities, rather than have two such clubs in the village the original club was invited to join forces and move to Moat Lane.

Ken Marsh

Former President Ken Marsh will be remembered for establishing the 'Over 60's competitions,' he also introduced the advertising boards which adorn the club fences. They proved an excellent source of income in the 1990's when they were first introduced. His wife Beryl presented the club with a wooden seat dedicated to his memory which is situated at the end of the green.

The Harris Family

Both a caring and successful ladies Captain on the green. Margaret also organised coach trips and bowling holidays. On a club holiday we were travelling by coach on the outward journey to the Isle of Wight. Dorothy (Dot) Chester's bowling bag containing her bowls and shoes somehow got lost on the motorway. Vehicles were overtaking and flashing the coach to stop as it left a trail of bowls bags along the road!

Two other club members also on that 1993 holiday were Brenda Farrier and Bob Castle', Love blossomed and the pair married in 1994.

Holland or Bust

The most memorable trip ever has got to be the 1992 trip to Floriade Flower Festival Keukenhof Gardens in Holland. The coach driver managed to get thoroughly lost, passing by Schiphol Airport 5 – 6- 7 times before driving up a ramp marked 'CARS ONLY', continuing through the Airport arriving on totally the wrong side of the City of Amsterdam.

Thanks to Will Maddocks linguistic skills (the ability to speak Double-Dutch) and the assistance of an English speaking Dutchman who's astonishment at how completely lost we were resembled something out of comic relief, enabled Will to reassure all passengers that there was "No problem" before directing Albert Smith the driver to our Hotel.

During Margaret Smith's term as Captain Ash ladies won Dover League in 1995, but she sadly died of cancer in 1996

Ash Ladies gained second place in Dover League in 1997 captained by Marie Maddocks.

Many of the ladies of ABC also belong to the Women's Institute, although belonging to the same bowls club their membership branches of the WI differed.

Because of this when in 1993 Dot Chester Dawn Harris Marie Maddocks Jan Norris Nina Vallack and Pam Wildish were asked to form a bowls team to represent East Kent WI Federation they called themselves 'Little Ash' (Littlebourne & Ash). They successfully won a play-off against other WI teams and were selected to represent East Kent in the NFWI Southern Region tournament. They proved an ideal combination the Hilda Pratt trophy shows the East Kent WI as frequent winners.



Channel Tunnel

Work commenced on constructing the Channel Tunnel in 1987 completed in 1993. While work was in progress the County of Kent experienced many 'Hose –pipe bans' which during hot dry spells could have spelt disaster for the bowling green. Following an appeal from, and under the guidance of the greens man they used the same format which had proved successful during the hot summers of 1996 /1997.

On several evenings a large number of willing volunteers including members from Preston and Littlebourne each carried buckets supplied by themselves filled with water, using them as improvised watering cans.

Forming a line covering the entire width, they walked slowly trying to keep in step from one end of the green to the other, until as much as possible of the green had been watered.

Any passing onlooker could be forgiven for thinking that they were observing some ancient ritual being performed. Expenditure for 1998/1999 includes new water tanks = £190-48p. New Automatic watering system & fittings =£5,325-62p.

David & Shirley Harris

"Rolling the green" with Eric Spinner proved a for-taster of the amount of hard work that Dave Harris has done on behalf and for the club since he became a member. As a professional tractor driver and agricultural worker his skills have been invaluable over the years. In exchange for a bottle of wine he was able to loan tractors and trailers from local farmer who was also a vice President David Nicholas. With which he was able to move large amounts of earth where necessary and even dug out a water trench. An excellent bowler with a great generosity of his time and enthusiasm for Ash bowls club.

Ron Goldfinch

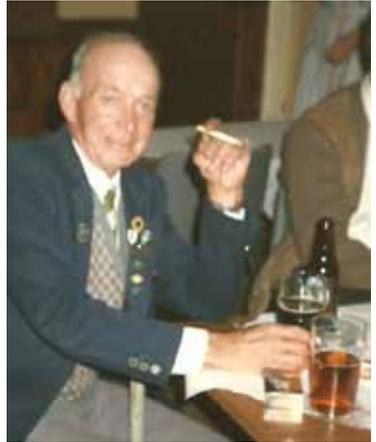
Amongst its members the club has always been very fortunate to have skilled craftsmen as members who readily applied their skills when needed to help the Club. Much of Ron Goldfinch's carpentry work in the way of shelves in the kitchen, book shelves etc have been used and very much appreciated since the Club house has been completed. Ron who lived in Littlebourne was a member for approximately 25 years.

Pam and Tom Wildish

Monday Club this was the original idea and suggestion of Tom Wildish it has proved to be one of the most popular and lasting events of the club. Tom a member for approximately 25 years also lived at Littlebourne and frequently worked with Ron Goldfinch spending many winter days painting the inside and outside of both the new clubhouse and of the previous one. His wife Pam was the first 'lady chairman'.

Charlie Hooper

Most of the building work that Charlie Hooper constructed has disappeared. This is particularly sad as it is actually recorded in the 1977 Minutes book how most Sunday mornings he could be seen working at the 'green' before 7am. He was the clubs 'Self appointed beer tester' whenever the club had a celebration which included a Bar, blessed with an excellent singing voice Charlie's melodic tones could be heard all across the green announcing his satisfaction of the 'brew'.



Fund Raising

Jumble sales had always been a good method of fund raising but with the growth of popularity of 'Boot fares' in the 1990's the support for them diminished.

A fund raising committee of Jan Norris, Pam Mawson and Beryl Reed now organises social events held in the club house which have included Barn Dances, Bingo, Quizzes and Whist Drives.

The ladies of the club have all willingly produced culinary dishes for all social events, when requested by the main stay and talented caterers in chief Shirley Harris & Jan Norris.

Alan Norris

Alan Norris - Men's Captain / Green keeper his professional gardening expertise proved yet another asset to the club. The high standard of the green and the many colourful flowers and shrubs now growing at Ash Bowls Club are a tribute to Alan's work. The tranquil garden situated at the right end corner of the green, is affectionately known as Toms garden the result of Tom Wildish's work.

The Shrubbery Bank

Work which transformed the grass bank into the attractive shrubbery garden that we all enjoy today commenced in 2008 when Mrs Dianne Johnson was Chairman. All of the 100 plants were either donated or paid for by members. Alan Norris started the work by laying plastic membrane sheeting to cover the ground of the bank to deter weeds etc. Thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of a great number of volunteers throughout 2009 and continued throughout 2010 they have succeeded in creating a delightful garden of perfumes and textures to be enjoyed possibly for the next hundred years.

Charlie

The most famous member of Ash Bowls Club always turned up for every game although it has to be said his dress often left much to be required (not always the cleanest): he never entered any tournaments. In fact no one ever saw him play a decent bowl but still everybody loved him. Charlie the yellow Labrador dog who's plaque can be seen at the entrance to the club house.

Joan Foad

Joan Foad married to Bill a modest lady with a huge talent for writing and producing hilarious entertainment for many of the clubs Presentation evenings. Usually written in verse with a flair for stating the obvious always guaranteed to have the audience in fits of laughter.



David Downs

David Downs Trustee and Ash based solicitor for the club died in 2010. As administrator of the Jack Foat Trust. He was also instrumental in securing financial grants from 'Sporting Bodies' besides negotiating the purchase of the ground and right of way of the road now leading to the clubs car park. Another significant event in the clubs history which involved David Downs was the purchase of the 'Ash Lawn Tennis Club' ground dated 21st April 1983. The club paid £50. The club was originally a Bowling and Tennis club left in trust by Sir Reginald Towers. In the 1960s the tennis club disbanded then reformed again in the 1980's when it moved to the recreation ground leaving their part of the club site vacant. After the club purchased the now vacant ground it was turned into a car park at a cost of £11,000. Flood lighting has since been added.

Hazel Wallis

At the 2002 AGM Hazel Wallis was thanked for her most generous contribution of £2000 towards the work on the new car park. Hazel Wallis and Pam Donaldson donated the bowls pushers to the club.

Mr Jack Foat

On June 13th 1911 a Mr J Foat is shown as having been selected to play 'Skip' for a number of matches this was probably John Foat a local butcher, father of John, who was known as Jack Foat. Subsequently over the following years a J Foat joined the committee progressing to Chairman eventually being elected President. The minutes only recorded the first initial of each J Foat making it difficult to record which J Foat was being referred to at any particular time. Noted in the minutes many 66 years and two world wars later on the 8th December 1977 the then President, Mr J Foat (presumably Jack) announced in his opening address to the AGM that he was aroused most Sunday mornings very early..!! He went on to explain that it was by the noise of a vehicle. Upon looking out of the bedroom window of 'The Crest', he could see a red van parked down the green and Charlie Hooper working away building the breeze block wall that would eventually form part of the forth rink.



President Jack Foat died in 1978 suggesting a family connection with the club of 67 years. It was this Jack Foat who after he and his wife Daisy didn't have any children, bequeathed 'The Jack Foat Trust' to his beloved Bowls club and the Village of Ash. President Louis Foat a family cousin died in 1995 although a member for a much shorter time than Jack, he also proved to be a good friend to the club by suggesting we applied to the Frank Kingsland Trust for help with funding for the clubhouse.



Missing Minutes

Due to the disappearance of the Minutes books between 1968 / 1975. Seven years of the clubs history has been lost. This is but a short potted history of some of the memories and findings I have managed to discover through research and talking to many of the people who have made this club what it is today. I am sure that there is still much more to write and I do sincerely apologise to anyone who feels that they have been overlooked in anyway but one lasting fact that has been echoed by all is this.

Friendship and camaraderie has always been the ethos of the game of bowls and many members of Ash Bowling club 2011 have enjoyed friendships lasting through several decade's.

Bricks and mortar may create buildings but its people who create history although without a green we wouldn't be able to play bowls.

I know that I speak for Will as well as the other members of the History Committee when I say that belonging to Ash Bowls Club has meant a great deal more than simply somewhere to go to play the game, with so many treasured memories of the members of the club, and having made some great friends along the way and I feel that I couldn't do better than to quote Vi Spinner when she said "Bowlers are such nice people".

And we're proud to be included in that group

Here's to the next 100 years.

Compiled by

Marie Maddocks Ladies Captain 1996 -1997 and former club secretary.

Additional material from

John Castle - Men's Captain 1976 -1978 and 19 times Club Champion and

Will Maddocks - former Men's Captain. Chairman and present Club President.

Andy Empson - History Working Group Chairman

Early Contributions from Shirley Harris and Jim Doyle

Editors note; all dated notes have been copied from official paperwork e.g. Minute books or club receipts.

As part of the Ash Bowls Club Centenary celebrations, I thought it would be a nice tribute to many of those who have been an integral part of creating our club and moulding it into what it is today by putting together a short history.

Obviously dates, people and places are important, but rather than me just simply making a list of dates accounting the trophies, winners and their achievements, thought it would be more interesting to take a look at the real people and their stories. So, I've purposely tried to include some of the lighter moments and recounting memories of not only mine, but those who have been also been part of the club for many years.

So, I sincerely hope you enjoy reading this history, as much as I have putting it together.

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