

WORCESTERSHIRE BOWLING ASSOCIATION
1930-1980 FIFTY YEARS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The inaugural meeting for the purposes of forming the Worcestershire County Bowling Association in order that application may be made for affiliation to the English Bowling Association, took place on Tuesday, 14th January 1930, and was convened at the Worcester Bowling Club.

The following Clubs were founder members, and in listing these, we do also recognise their representatives who laid the foundation of what is now a Healthy Association.

WORCESTER B.C.

Aid. A. A. Maund, Messrs. S. W. Hall and P. J. Willies.

DROITWICH SPA B.C.

Aid. E. Evans, Messrs. C. Jones and W. Langley.

SENTINEL B.C.

Messrs. J. H. Miller, J. Neilson and J. Oswald.

HEWELL B.C.

Messrs. F. Molyneux, T. Buckley and A. & F. Frazier.

MALVERN VICTORIA B.C.

Messrs. W. H. Jones, H. P. Pembridge and H. W. Thomas.

CINDERELLA B.C.

Messrs. H. R. Evans, G. Cushion and G. Meredith.

With A. Mutlow (Hon. Sec. Pro. Tem.) (Worcester B.C.).

Aid. A. Maund was unanimously elected as Chairman for the meeting and on his proposition, which was seconded by Aid. Evans, the Worcestershire Bowling Association was formed, and Albert Mutlow of the Worcester Bowling Club, was subsequently elected Hon. Secretary—thus ended an era for these Clubs who were originally members of the Herefordshire Bowling Association from 1928—for the purposes of competing at National level.

It is interesting to note that, currently, the Secretary of the English Bowling Association had recommended two eminent Gentlemen to represent Worcestershire on the Council of the English Bowling Association, one no less personage than his Worship the Mayor of Wimbledon, and E. H. Hogson, C.B., O.B.E. (London). These Gentlemen were unanimously elected.

The growth of the County was very steady but by 20th February 1936, with the acceptance of the Broadway B.C. the number of affiliated Clubs had doubled and were 12 in all. Individuals within the Association did much in this period to retain the character of the Association, the Aldermen of the City and County, and certainly the Earl of Plymouth, who was the President of the County until 1943, and those Gentlemen who became Vice-Presidents—Names like Lord MonseH, Rupert De La Bere, Esq., M.P., W. P. Crawford-Green, Esq., M.P., Dr. C. T. Curtis of Droitwich—Chairman of the Council from 1934-1939, Arthur Averill, Fred Turner, George Cushion of the Cinderella Club who was the Hon. Auditor for many years. The Secretaryship changed hands in 1934 when L H. (Joe) Miller, the Accountant at Alley and McLellans Ltd. (Sentinel B.C.), took over from Albert Mutlow and he, in turn, subsequently relinquished his Office in 1937 to W. H. (Bill) Taylor, also of the Sentinel B.C., the latter holding Office until his death in February 1959. In compiling these notes on the History of the Association there is obviously a number of persons who, because of space, cannot be mentioned but, as a tribute, it is certain that they will always be remembered.

One who probably must be mentioned even if only for his adherence to the Rules of the Association, which incidentally he helped to compile and amend from time to time, that is the late “Bill” Lock. “Bill” was a member of the County Ground Bowling Club when their members were permitted to play in front of the Pavilion on the County Cricket Ground and, in a report in the “Bowls News”, as far back as 1948, Bill Lock lists the History of the County Ground B.C. Dating back to the year 1900 when the Worcestershire C.C.C. moved from Boughton Park to the New Road Ground—It was then, one evening over drinks in the Pavilion, that some of the members (Retired Business Men), were chatting, when someone mentioned the game of Bowls and from those discussions the “County Ground” Bowling Club was born and for several years Membership was restricted to Members of the Cricket Club, eventually Membership was opened to Gentlemen who were not “Full” Cricket Members and in the 1920’s the Club became one of the strongest in the County—Association in 1931 and in 1937 moved to the new Corporation Greens at Cripplegate Park, still retaining their name of the County Ground B C. “Bill” Lock was proud to have been a Member of his Club and his County, both of which he served the Club became affiliated to the Worcestershire Bowling well—having been President and Hon. Life Member of the County Association, he was also honoured by the English Bowling Association for his work at County and National level, being made an Honorary Life Member of the E.B.A. in 1965.

Another name to enter the roll of Honour of the Association must surely be the late Vernon W. Turner who, in the 50 years of the Association, became the only Member to be elected President of the English Bowling Association, this in 1952—an Honour that both Vernon and the County Association cherished with pride. It is remarkable, on reflection, to note that it was not until 1963 that he became President of the County Association having been an active Member of

the Worcester Bowling Club for a great number of years—in taking over the Presidency, Vernon Turner followed in the footsteps of his father, Mr. Fred Turner, who was President in 1946, another father and son Presidency duet was of course the late “Bert” Marshall, who was President in 1950-52 and his son, Arthur, became President in 1975, both incidentally members of the Worcester Bowling Club.

Family couples show up on other occasions in the History of the Association—after the late “Bill” Taylor completed his life span in 1959 his Office as Secretary was handed on to his youngest son Henry, at that time a member of the Executive representing Archdale’s Bowling and with a completed term of Office going into 1969 this meant a total of 33 years of service by father and son in the combined service of Secretary/ Treasurer. On the playing side no family tie was probably so complete as the father and son combination of Harry and Tony Russell, both very keen competitors — Harry, originally a member of the Sentinel Bowling Club, was generally associated with Charlie Coxall—but in 1947, partnered by the late Bob Smith, he was in the Final of the County Pairs against “Bill” Lock and Sid Adams, the final going to an extra end which “Bill” Lock and Sid Adams won by one shot and eventually became the first Worcestershire Bowlers to win the National Championship. The score of that 1947 Pairs Final is still in existence and at 14 ends Lock and Andrews were in the lead 14 shots to 8 then Russell and Smith scored 6 shots in 5 ends to level the game at 19 ends. Lock and Adams went ahead by 2 on the 20th end and the game was all square on the 21st end at 16 all. Worcestershire’s list of National and International took rather a long time in starting, as already told “Bill” Lock and Sid Adams were the first in 1947—we then had to wait until 1955 when a Triples from the Evesham Club’ skipped by “Archie” Fry and including Ted Perritt and George Grove were finalists in the National Triples, then to 1960 when young Jim Coates then of the County Ground Bowling Club reached the Semi-Finals of the National Singles. The Coates family were very much in prominence in this era for in 1964 Peter Coates and Gerry Webb of M.E.S. and S.C. Club won the National Pairs and in 1967 Jim Coates partnered by Percy Hall were Semi-finalists in the National Pairs Championship. 1967 and 1974 were years of remembrance for the Jubilee President W. C. “BiH” Irish, for in these years he became the National Singles Champion. Bill Irish also reached the Semi-finals of the National Four Championship with Maurice Surman, Gerry Lucy and Harry Davis, all of Vines Park B.C. It was not until 1969 that we had full International Honours — Peter Coates of the M.E.S. and S.C. was selected for the International Team in 1969 and 1970. We had a break then until 1975 when “Bill” Irish was finally selected and has subsequently retained his place in 1977, ’78 and ’79. Other Members of the Association duly honoured by international selection were “Alec” Jackson in 1977 and 1979.

Having already mentioned Tony Russell in a father and son combination it is also interesting to note that Tony partnered by Cilve Hall became the third Worcestershire couple to win the National Pairs Championships, the year 1977 and in 1978 both were selected for the International Team, in fact in 1978 and

1979 Worcestershire provided three players for the International Team: Irish, Russell and Hall in 1978 and Irish, Russell and Jackson in 1979.

From 1936 until 1939 the growth of the County was very slow and, after the acceptance of the Broadway B.C. in February 1936, the following Clubs made application and were accepted:

November 1936, Terry's B.C.; December 1936, Barbourne B.C, December 1938, Brotherhood; February 1939, G.W.R.; October 1939, Pershore Abbey and into 1940 with the admission of the Pershore Brotherhood Club, the number of Clubs totalled 18. The Redditch area increased their interests in the Association with the inclusion of High Duty Alloys B.C. in 1943 and Enfield Cycle B.C. in 1945, bringing the number of Clubs in this area, as members of the Association to five. In the years immediately after the War (in 1945), there were three clubs admitted to the Association, Worcester City Constabulary in March, Sheet Metal in October and of course the Enfield Club. More familiar names came to the fore in the next period, 1947-1952, Fernhill Heath, Cadbury's and Upton-upon-Severn— all, very unfortunately, now defunct. 1950 was a year of more progress — Evesham Abbey (Remember their delightfully situated Green), the Worcester Co-op Social Club, Metal Box and Archdale's—it is most unfortunate that a number of these Clubs were forced to close, either from lack of support or financial problems, but no doubt there are those members who still retain happy memories of those earlier days of the Association. It is still recalled how, in the early days at the Hewell Bowling Club, the names of Ernie Green and Tommy Hirns were always associated with the County—Tommy Hirns knew how to prepare the green at Howell—no new-fangled mowers for him—"Best use the Scythe he says". Alex Wyllie of High Duty Alloy Bowling Club was another individual who, by his application to his office as Secretary, gave tremendous support to the County from the Redditch area.

The Golden Cross (Bromsgrove), Meco and The Manor Park Clubs, were all admitted in 1951, the M.E.S. and S.C. in 1952, and in 1953 the News and Times Club. In 1956 St Dunstan's Bowling Club changed over from Crown to Flat and were accepted into membership of the County, this was followed later in 1956 by the acceptance of Vines Park B.C., Worcester G.P.O. and H. W. Ward's S. and S.C.

1957 saw the addition of the Redditch Liberal Club, thus adding another Club to the Redditch area, in 1959 yet another Club from the County areas, South Littleton, joined the Association, Powick Hospital Bowls Club affiliated in 1960 and in 1961 Bredon and British Aluminium Bowls Club were admitted. The records show that there were no further admissions until 1965, when the B.S.A. Club were admitted, but unfortunately, their membership was very short lived.

The ambition of each President of the Association has been to win the County Championship. The Middleton Cup—but to date this trophy has, so far, not been won by Worcestershire. We have reached the Quarterfinals and Semi-finals, but never appeared in the Finals. In 1972 a great start against Warwickshire showed Worcestershire winning by 30 shots, winning on 4 Rinks, drawing on 1 and losing 1 Rink, to total 127 shots against 97— in the words of Jason Baldwin, the captain in that year, “We shuffled the team around a bit and put out a team of triers, who played their hearts out.”

In this brief résumé of the Association, there are certain Members who, because of their Office and mannerisms, will be remembered for quite a time, but for posterity their names must be recorded; the late Sam Bevan, Secretary of the Association from 1970-'73 and previously the Secretary (professionally) of the M.E.S. and S.C. Social Club. Sam was succeeded in Office by Bruce Keith who held the Office of Secretary from 1973-77, Bruce served his apprenticeship with the N.A.L.G.O. and Brotherhood Clubs but decided that enough was enough and is now no longer a member of the Association. The strength of the Association lies in the support it receives from those Clubs affiliated and to the Members and Officers of the Member Clubs—Clubs like the Worcester Bowling Club, who celebrated their Centenary in 1967 and who as our Records show, were Founder Members of the Association and have provided notable officers for the County over the years. The Worcester Bowling Club have always maintained strong ties with the Association and on the administration side of the Worcester Bowling Club one must record the loyalty and service of Ron. W. Burrows, who was Club Secretary for some 30 years, surely this must be a record in our County and one that the Club must be proud of.

In this the Jubilee Year of the Association, we must surely look back over the years and reminisce a little with, it is hoped, some very happy thoughts, but always we must look to the future of the Association which is in the hands of all Members of Affiliated Clubs but also in the hands of the Administration of the Association, your President, Officers, Executive Council and General Purposes Committee—they can only go forward with the continued support of the Member Clubs—May 1980— the 50th Year of the Association—be crowned with success and your President “Bill” Irish and his Executive Officers, Adrian Bolt and Arthur McPhail, together with the Back-up Team of Administrative Staff in Norman Deeproose, Fred Langstone, Stan Parker, Bill Watkins and “Jim” Kennedy, realise that their efforts have been for a worthwhile cause.

H. W. TAYLOR, Press Officer