

WORCESTERSHIRE BOWLING ASSOCIATION
1930-2005
SEVENTY FIVE YEARS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Introduction from the E.B.A. President John Tolley

Many congratulations to Worcestershire Bowling Association on your 75th Anniversary. I wish your President Graham Hill and his officers an enjoyable and memorable year. We must be extremely grateful to our predecessors who had the foresight to create our County Organization back in 1930. We owe a debt of gratitude to all those Officers who have devoted many, many hours and travelled many miles in conducting the business of the County. We should also remember all the Officers and Members of each club for their contributions because the County is only as successful as the clubs and their members. As President of the English Bowling Association in 2005, I am particularly proud to be a member of Worcestershire B.A. and heartily thank the Association for not only nominating me but also for its support during the past two years.

John Tolley President English Bowling Association 2005

The Forward

We congratulate Hewell Bowling Club on John Tolley being elected President of the English Bowling Association and Graham Hill President of the Worcestershire Bowling Association

This is not the first time this has occurred, in 1952 two Worcester Bowling Club members Mr. Herbert Marshall was County President and Mr. Vernon Turner was E.B.A. President and Hon. Life member. Vernon W. Turner became the first member of the Association to be elected President of the English Bowling Association.

We must also mention HJ. (John) Hall who was County President in 1985, Chairman of World Bowls 1988/1992, E.B.A. President & Hon. Life Member in 1990 and President of the British Isles Bowls Council in 1993.

The inaugural meeting and forming of our Association took place on Tuesday 14th January 1930 and was held at Worcester Bowling Club. An application was then made for affiliation to the English Bowling Association.

The following clubs were founder members of our association and in listing these; we recognize and thank their representatives who laid the foundation for our present day structure.

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 and Dr. P. A. Roden J. P.

SENTINEL B.C.

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

HEWELL, B. C.

Messrs, F. Molyneux, T. Buckley and A. G. 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.

This 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

The growth of the County was steady and by the 20th February 1936 with the acceptance of Broadway B. C. the number of affiliated Clubs had doubled to 12. Many individuals within the Association helped to retain the character, these include The Earl of Plymouth, who was President of the County until 1943, and those gentlemen who became Vice-Presidents - names like Lord Monsell, 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.

When the Association celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1980 there were 34 clubs and today we have 36 and the changes from 1980 are :-Clubs no longer in existence:- British Aluminum B.C., Metal Box B.C., M.E.C.O. B.C., M.E.S. & S.C., Post Office B.C., Redditch Liberal B.C., Terry's B.C., H. W. Wards B.C., West Mercia Constabulary B.C. "C" Division and Worcester Co-operative B.C.

New clubs that have affiliated since 1980:- Aston Somerville B.C., Bank House B.C., established in 1992 with members of the original Hylton B.C. which was to be closed. The club had a remarkable season in 1996 when Ian Maddox & Rob Stanley won the National Pairs and the club won the National Club Two Fours. Black Country B.C., Chester Road B.C. Charford B.C.. Community B.C., Crystal B.C., Inkberrow B.C., Kays B.C., Lilleshall B.C., Overbury B.C. and Stourport B.C. More information about all the clubs can be found in the section "Club Histories".

What are the major changes since 1980!

Firstly most clubs would have been playing Men only fixtures then and the after match teas provided by the wonderful band of lady volunteers and each game would have been over six rinks. Today most clubs play mixed matches ladies & gents and because of the fewer number of bowlers playing the game some games consist of five rinks only. The teas arrangements to-day vary from club to club with some clubs still having ladies willing to provide teas, some clubs use outside organizations and other clubs have a roster system of their own club members taking in turn to provide the teas. Also many ladies now hold office at club level.

Another major talking point at the moment is the proposed Unification of the Four Governing bodies of Flat green bowling i.e. The English Bowling Association, English Women's Bowling Association, English Indoor Bowling Association and English Women's Indoor Bowling Association. It is recommended that the Four Governing Bodies amalgamate to establish One Governing Body for the Sport - "Bowls England". One of the reasons for the proposed amalgamation states "The creation of one flat green governing body meets one the key objectives of the Game Plan:

"The strategy for the delivery of Government's sport and physical activity objectives and will significantly improve the governing bodies of bowls ability to increase and sustain participation in the sport". These are indeed fine words and with amalgamation hopefully, administration costs would be reduced and money obtained for the "Grass Roots" element of the Game.

Bowls Stamp: Was this an issue in 1980! But just to remind you all "From 2005 and onwards all bowls used at the National Championships must comply with Law 12 of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls. I.e. any bowls with a stamp earlier than 1995 will not be allowed to be used. What would our members prior to 1980 think of the rule, introduced last year, when you have won an end you can give the mat away!

The sport is now shown on National Television

One word "Vandalism" was something bowling clubs did not have any problems with back in 1980's

Other Points of Interest.

The Association is indebted to Mike Willis who was County President 2002 and who made a presentation to the Association at the Annual Meeting in December 2004 with a New Chain of Office for all future presidents to wear. "Thanks Mike".

To celebrate the 75th anniversary a special game has been arranged on Sunday 7th August 2005. Each of the Association's 36 clubs has been requested to nominate players to participate in this game. After the game the President will present a County Plaque to each club. Details will be sent to each club and your cooperation will be appreciated. The game will be played on the greens at Brintons, Chain Wire and Gilt Edge.

When we start talking about our Association, one person, who probably must be mentioned, is "Bill Lock" who helped compile and amend from time to time the Rules of our Association. Bill was a member County Ground Bowling Club when their members were permitted to play in front of the pavilion on the County Cricket Ground. All the details about the history of Worcester County Ground can be found in the section under "Club Histories".

The one name that present bowlers all know is that of Norman Deepprose who has been the County Secretary since 1978 and still going strong, also Secretary of the English Bowls Umpires Association. 1988/2004, and is well known for his knowledge of the Laws of the Game. He was elected an Hon. Life Member of the E.B.A. 1991, has umpired in two Commonwealth Games Canada 1994 and Manchester 2002, and was also invited by both the Lawn Bowling Association DE ESPANA in 1992 and the Malaysian Lawn Bowls Association to conduct courses for potential Umpires in Andalucía, and Kuala Lumpur. He has also served on the National Executive Committee since 1982 and has been involved in the team running the National Championships at Worthing since 1984. Norman is at present, Chairman of the English Bowling Association Match Organization Committee. He is now also a member of the World Bowls Committee for the Laws of the Sport of Bowls. "What a Record."

Fred Langstone was the County Treasurer for Thirty Two years and was very much liked by everybody and a real gentleman and was a Hon. Life Member of both the English Bowling Association and Worcestershire Bowling Association.

The present WBA Treasurer Colin Pinchin has been in office since 1997, has attended nearly every County Competitive game, County friendless, P. & E. games and always collected the SUBS and has ensured that the County stands on a sound financial footing and in 2004 was made a Hon. Life Member of the Association.

On the playing side family ties have always been important, two families only are mentioned, but many more have contributed to the County success. The Coates combination of father Fred and sons Jim and Peter are really well known within the County. Jim Coates (M.E.S. & S.C. & County Ground) now Gilt Edge has always been a tremendous supporter of the WBA and played his first County Game in 1947. Became a County selector in 1972 and is still involved today as the County Match Secretary, was County President in 2000 and is also a WBA Hon. Life Member and still plays the occasional County Friendly. Peter Coates (M.E.S. & S.C.) now Gilt Edge was the first County member to be selected for England in 1969 and reserve in 1970 and still playing the odd game. Both Jim and Peter won many County competitions. A father and son combination of Harry and Tony Russell - Harry, originally a member of the Sentinel B.C. and Tony who represented England in 1978/79 & 80 & triallist 1981. Tony has won EBA National Titles the last being in 1988 when he won the National Over 55's Pairs with A. Baylis. Tony still plays for Worcester B.C.

It is very pleasing to report some of the County players who have represented the County at the highest level

Bill Irish also has a great record in representing Worcestershire, Bill played for England from 1975 until 1981, and won two medals in the World Championship of 1976 (Silver/triples & Bronze/Fours) won the British Isles Single Championship 1974, played in the Commonwealth Games in Canada 1978 and was E.B.A. National Singles Champion twice 1967/1974.

From the present day bowlers Grant Burgess stands out with his Fifty England caps gained over fourteen seasons & also Captain in 1998 plus playing in the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. Grant has also won the National Triples in 1987 & Singles title in 1998 and we all hope that he will be selected for England again in 2005. Grant has represented his County in many National Competitions with outstanding results and has been a true ambassador for the County Association.

Players who represented England since 1980:-

1990 G Burgess (see above)
1995 & 2000 Dean Hemming (Bank House) Junior Team Member.
1997/98 Rob Stanley (Bank House) England Team Member.
2002 Craig Hall (Brintons) Junior Team Member 2003/04 Marc Stones (Gilt Edge) Junior Team Member

National Champions Since 1980:-

1986 Winner SAGA National 60's & Over Singles A Baylis (Worcester County Ground)
1987 Winners National Triples M Weaver, J Weaver, G Burgess (Worcester County Ground)
1988 Winner National Over 55's Singles. G. Readman (Worcester Brotherhood)
1994 Winner National under 18's Singles D Hemming (Bank House)
1996 Winners National Pairs I Maddox, R Stanley (Bank House) and Bank House B.C. winners of the National Club Two Fours.
1997 Winner National Champion of Champion's A Jackson (Broadway)
1998 Winner National Singles G. Burgess (Gilt Edge)

Only nine players have won all four competitions played for within the County competitions, i.e. Singles, Pairs, Triples & Fours. The players are: M Atkins, J Coates (who achieved it in the 1950's, 60's, & 70's some record), P Coates, G Burgess, G Harrison, W Lock, M Oldnall, F Powell and F Summers.

When you visit the pages in this Handbook illustrating National and County Honours you will appreciate that for a County that has only a small number of clubs we have had magnificent success at the highest national level with many bowlers achieving outstanding results and many of the names keep reappearing in the honours list.

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 quarter-finals and semi-finals, and reached the final in 1996 beating Surrey in the morning but losing to Lincolnshire in the afternoon perhaps 2005 will be our year. The player with the most appearances in this competition is Ian Jenkins with 78, Ian sadly retired at the end of 2003, the season that he reached the Semi-Finals of the Fours at Worthing, and he is missed by his teammates because of his commitment, enthusiasm and enjoyment of the game. Rob Stanley has played 76, Grant Burgess & John Weaver 72 and Brian Borthwick 61.

In compiling these brief notes on the History of our Association there are obviously many persons too numerous to be mentioned. We should all remember the many bowlers who have given up there time to serve on bowls committees at National, County and Club levels to ensure that this great game can be played and enjoyed. Also, all the bowlers who help cut the greens, decorate clubs houses and all the other jobs that have to be done, but, as a tribute, it is certain that we all owe them all a great debt of gratitude. This is a time when we should also remember all the friends and fellow bowlers who are no longer with us.

In this 75th year of the Association we must surely look back over the years and reminisce a little with, hopefully happy thoughts and at a time of change when the numbers of bowlers playing the game are decreasing, we must find ways of encouraging new players into our sport.

The future of the Association is in the hands of all members of the Affiliated Clubs. Your President, Officers, and General Purposes Committee are responsible for the administration of the County and can only go forward with the continued support of all the member clubs.

Let's hope that 2005 be crowned with success for the Worcestershire Bowling Association.