

Billingshurst Bowling Club celebrates its 90th Anniversary

Formed in 1932, Billingshurst Bowling Club this year celebrates its 90th Anniversary. A group of mainly local tradesmen: Mr Higgins (the Ironmonger), Mr Lusted (the Grocer), Mr Crisp (the Hairdresser & Tobacconist), Mr Wadey (the Builder), Mr Cripps (the Butcher) and Mr Watt (the Corn & Seed Merchant), set up the Club with Dr. Puttock the Chairman of the Committee. A Miss Puttock leased the land for a peppercorn rent of just one shilling (5p) per annum.

The Green, neatly tucked away behind the Station Road Gardens, is Billingshurst's best kept secret surrounded on three sides now by the Weald School. Originally, the green had only three rinks and the grass cut with a hand mower. Trying to obtain the services of a groundsman always proved difficult, as the pay being rather low at only sixpence per hour.

The Pavilion at that time was very basic with no sanitation, just a wooden construction with a corrugated sheet for a roof. Fences were necessary to keep out Miss Puttock's cattle from the adjoining pastures. Matches arranged against local clubs such as Graffham, Midhurst and Handcross being the first village teams to play against. During the Second World War, the club was effectively dormant with the site used by the local A.T.C. and Red Cross for training - at one time, part of the green also served as a tennis court.

Then, during the late 1950's many changes and improvements were made, the green was extended to six rinks and with the installation of mains water and electricity. With the clubhouse extended to incorporate changing rooms, a kitchen, lounge area and flushing toilets. A second pavilion was erected later to provide comfortable accommodation to enjoy tea and supper refreshments after matches. The latter building was converted from a large portacabin that had previously served as a parish room at Climping church. Club members re-clad the exterior with a wooden façade and fitted a pitched roof to complement the old clubhouse. The new building was named "The Stocker Pavilion" in honour of the late Jack Stocker, who was a skilled carpenter and masterminded the whole project. Another improvement was the installation of an automated watering system, very different from loaning a standpipe and a long hose from the old cricket club! Over the years Billingshurst has had some success in Cup Competitions, for instance since 1961, Billingshurst has won the Holbrook Cup thirteen times, the last being in 2015.



Billingshurst Bowls Club winners of the Holbrook Cup 2015

Currently, the Club plays friendly mixed matches against many clubs in West Sussex and Surrey. Matches are played on weekdays and at weekends, both afternoons and evenings. In addition, there is a full range of internal Club competitions and friendly sessions; everyone is encouraged to join in. We still enter the Holbrook Cup, and other competitions and are always looking for new members and all abilities are welcome from beginners up to County standard. Newcomers are always amazed at how quickly they pick up the game, although it is not quite as easy as it appears on television!

Every Friday evening is our Club night, and you are most welcome to come along and have a try, so, if you would like to test your skill, enjoy some gentle exercise and make some new friends please do come along. We are there from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm with tea and refreshments after. You are also most welcome to come and watch our home matches, details of which you will find on our website. www.billingshurstbowlingclub.co.uk

Various pictures throughout our 90 years

