Member's Memories

Thanks to those members who provided personal recollections and stories of the club.

John Ash

Not quite as old as some, but old enough to remember when summers were sunny and evenings at the bowling green were warm and mellow and I am sure there must have been more than 7 days in a week!

Most played in league games and competed in competitions but there seemed to be so much more time for roll-ups and socialising. The green was busy all week, afternoons, evenings; Saturdays and Sundays as much as any other day. The Bar was open more or less every evening of the week. In charge was a lovely lady, Dorothy Wiltshire, who looked after us. She would bring her husband Stan (who by this time was infirm) to the green, ply him with 3 or 4 Speckled Hens to keep him happy and then look after everyone else. The Clubhouse would often be open till l0pm with people putting the world to rights.

There were a number of people who helped my wife and me to integrate into the Club in the early days. Roy Turner took us under his wing, gave us tuition and made sure we were included in roll-ups. These were serious events and eventually I ended up playing with the 'Big Boys'. Roy Turner I have mentioned, then there was Harold Niblett - a real diamond of a chap, spoke his mind somewhat forcibly but had a heart of gold and often no teeth!

Stan Jefferies - 'Stan the man' - the barber, was not the tidiest of men but what a character! He would buy anyone a drink win or lose and could often be found after a game cutting someones hair in the men's locker room.

Tommy Muckles - 'Andover's best centre forward ever' - a real dapper man. Always dressed the same way, wearing a beige anorak over his bowling clothes when arriving or leaving the green. Other names come to mind - Arthur and Billy Turner, George Morris, Derek Spencer and Bob Coleman. Most weeks we would arrange a couple of evening roll-ups, often including the Saturday and Sunday. Serious stuff the losers bought the drinks! The finale of the game being bowling to the jack diagonally across the green (quite a long way!). Playing with these types of players soon improved my game.

So, I have painted a rose coloured picture. These memories I choose to jot down, but there were just as many 'political' goings on as today - these I choose to forget.

So many things have changed over the years and not always for the better (in my opinion). There was nothing nicer than opening the gate to the green and seeing all the bowlers in greys/whites, even for roll-ups. There was also an item of clothing called a 'blazer'. This being mandatory for certain leagues and competitions. And it was worn with pride. They were even using Woods that had a bias on them!!!

I've probably become an old 'Fuddy-Duddy' - so be it! But I must say that I have loved my bowling and loved being a member of Andover Bowling Club and under the leadership of David Canniford and David Hamilton may it have a great Centenary year and continue to flourish for years to come.

Chris Spencer

Going back to the 1960s when we played on the old green, Andover Bowlers travelled to Wilton to play in the S & D League. On arrival they found the green locked. An Andover player remembered that one of the Wilton players had a fish shop in the town. Andover bowlers went down to the shop to find out what had happened and were told the Wilton players had gone to Andover. Whoops!! I don't know who made the blunder.

Another time, a friendly fixture with Swindon was arranged at the new green on a Sunday. The Swindon team arrived in a big coach. We were horrified to see them all getting off the coach. Swindon had brought along numerous spectators in order to help fund the trip.

In those days there were no Supermarkets and no Sunday trading. This created a catering problem for us. We had insufficient chairs, tables or crockery. We had only catered for the team so we were also short of food.

It was decided we would invite the spectators in to an early tea so that we could clear and get ready for the teams at the end of the game. We shared out the food. One of the caterers was able to pop back home to get some milk. The spectators were so comfortable that we had to give them a polite nudge to vacate the tables. What a panic!

The following year we went to Swindon. They had a super new pavilion with planters on the paved patio. There were plastic tables and chairs with parasols.

The next year they decided to abandon the fixture as they did not want to come to Andover because we did not have a Bar. Snobbery or What!

Muckspreaders

On an occasion when our Andover boys were playing a match versus Pirrie Park away they were welcomed by PP members as being 'the muck spreaders from up the sticks', to which our boys replied "We might be from out in the wilds but we can bowl as well as you". Then came the challenge from PP "Okay we will play you for a fish and chip supper" - challenge accepted - game arranged.

Peter Morris, Charlie White, Derek Spencer, Bryce Edwards

You will see they dressed for the occasion, borrowed a minibus and with a saucepan full of mushrooms off they went.

On their arrival at PP there were gasps of surprise as such gear was never seen on bowling greens. Ladies in the bar were asking, "Who are they; are they the Worzels?"

A very friendly game was played with Fish and chips enjoyed, followed by one or two drinks.

A good time was had by all, then homeward bound. (Andover won)

Roy Turner

I joined Andover Bowling Club in 1975, the same time as my brothers, Arthur and Billy. In 1976 we entered the County Triples and were drawn against a Triple from Atherley. We were given no hope of winning, but held out for the first few ends.

After losing 7 shots on the 5th end we managed to fight back and win. Naturally this did not go down too well the skip Mike Walton. On signing the card he remarked on our surnames and asked if we were accountants. I replied that we were undertakers, we buried them today. We all shook hands and they wished us the best in the next round before making a quick exit.

Bob Coleman

Arthur Turner and Fred Corden used to help on the green. Fred was good at engineering - he was responsible for getting the garage. He came down one day and he said the prefabs were being taken down; they all had garages. The site had to be cleared quickly, so we got a van, went down and dismantled the garage and put it up at the club.

I was greenkeeper for about 13 years. Fred was there all the time and Arthur was on and off. Fred used to cut the hedge with his Electric cutter. We had to keep a reel of tape handy because he used to cut through the cable!!

We took over the equipment from the Council; the scarifier, mower, and spiking machine. We once hired a machine to blast air into the grass roots - it took 8 bags of top dressing to fill in the holes. We used go to the Groundsmen's Show at Windsor and go round the stalls. They all offered us a drink. John Ash and Richard Hunt came with us. Richard took over from me when I retired.

Other Events

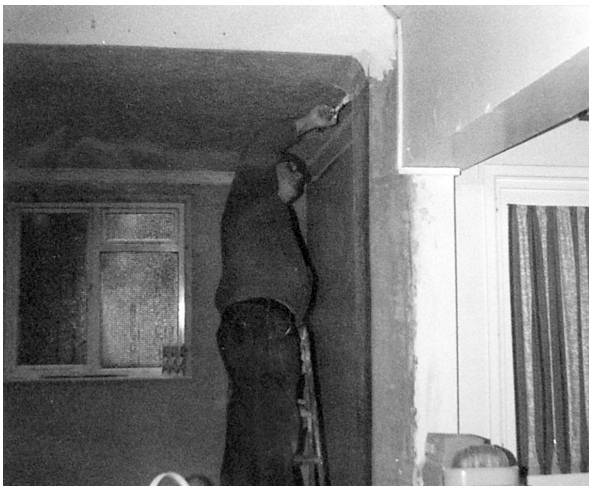
Reg Boxall and Tony West

Club renovation

In the early '90s the committee received permission to make improvements to the clubhouse. These were to include a bar, improved kitchen and better changing rooms, with new facilities for the ladies. Prior to this the club were sharing changing rooms with the tennis club.

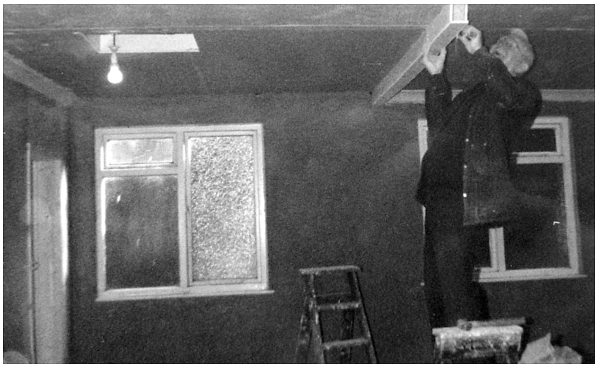
Led by Tony West and Reg Boxall, the team of stalwarts set to work over the winter months. Lady members made curtains and tie-backs to further improve the appearance. New (secondhand!) furniture appeared and the overall result transformed the clubhouse to the standard we enjoy today.

Chris Spencer checks the progress



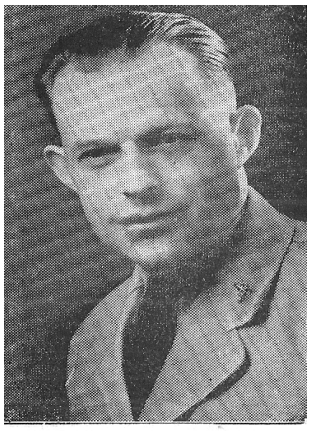
Painting in the dark?

Posh new (level) toilet for the ladies



Reg Boxall sorts the electrics!

Past Personalities



S. C. BUTLER

Sid Butler

Was also a keen cricketer and well known local Football referee.

A. L. MITCHELL

Alf Mitchell

A local grocer who was Club Captain during the early '60s when the club had some of its most successful seasons. Also played cricket for Andover and was captain of a local billiards team.

V. W. BULL

Vic Bull

A postman who played bowls for the G.P.O. and Andover BC. He won many competitions and got to the final of the County Rinks. He also played for Hampshire.

J. BLAKE

Jack Blake

A bowler who, in his younger years, played football and cricket for local clubs. Played football for Hampshire in the pre-war years and scored 1000 runs for Andover C.C. in 1933.