

History of Oakley Bowling Club

Part 3

If 1980 began as a year full of hope, it soon failed to live up to expectations. The Committee, which at that time met in the Methodist Chapel, did tremendous work in developing the proposals for the new green at Andover Road. The terms of a lease were agreed with the Council and, as the Council had indicated it would assist financially with the project, a loan facility was established with a brewery, as was a member's loan scheme. All looked to be proceeding well when, in advance of the signing of the formal lease, the Council agreed the Club could have entry to the site to begin building works. By June, however, the Council was prevaricating with Councillors and Officers speaking with different voices and talk of final decisions having to await agreement to a Corporate Leisure Plan which might not be given before 1981. By now some £1,200 of Club funds had been committed to the project and, given the history over the indoor green there were concerns over the Council's intentions. As a result, a Special General Meeting in August agreed unanimously that no further funds should be spent on the Andover Road site until there was an unequivocal statement from the Council that it was prepared to support the project. The Committee was also asked to investigate whether any alternative site presented itself. These investigations, led by Arthur Dolton, revealed for the first time that it might be possible to build a green on the Malshanger Estate and, at the November AGM, agreement was given to the Committee exploring this possibility whilst continuing discussions with the Council.

The difficulty of making progress at this time was not helped by internal wrangling in Committee on matters unrelated to the development. The minutes of a June meeting record heated debate over issues like selection, whether women should be allowed to play in a President's rink and over dress code. The minutes end with a Secretary's note that only a tape recorder would have enabled him to do justice to this happy chronicle in the Club's development.

Socially, however, and on the green the Club continued to make progress. During the year, the Club arranged a cheese and wine party, a canal boat trip, and a disco, all of which helped to boost club funds which by November stood at £2.5k of which £0.7k comprised development loans.

On the green it was a successful season with Edna Woodward winning the North Hants Women's BA Singles and the Oakley Ladies lifting the NHWBA Gazette Cup. Bill Hudson



and Spencer Kerley won 5 rounds in the County Pairs but crashed to defeat in the County Area Final, 28-0 down they picked up a four and then conceded. In those days there were many local Open tournaments with the Gooseys winning the Basingstoke and District Open Pairs and Edna, Bill Brooks and Fred Brickell the Portals American Triples.

Club Finals saw Vi Hatch retain the Ladies Singles with Jim Barnett lifting the Men's event. This was the first season for the Open Mixed Pairs event, the trophy fittingly being won by Peggy and Harry Rutherford, who had presented it.