

History of Oakley Bowling Club

Part 5

Ahead of the times as usual, 1982 saw Oakley with a foreign President in the form of Harry Rutherford, who hailed from north of the Border. The Club had also elected its first female Vice President. This was to cause some ructions in the County but more in Part 6.

Considerable effort in 1982 went into fund raising. We began the Jack High Club with Harry Rutherford selling Jack High Tickets at the AA and by his own efforts raising in January-March some £500. We had another Cheese and Wine evening at Peter Bown's parents farm and in April there was a highly successful 50-50 Auction, with auctioneer Bill Brooks, which produced a profit of some £600. Various coffee mornings were held around the village and a St Ledger Draw was run. So successful was fund raising that at the April meeting the Treasurer reported that some £5,500 had been raised towards the new facilities at Malshanger. Work on these



facilities began on 1st June and the Secretary, Spencer Kerley, was reported in the Gazette as saying "At last the Club has a permanent base within easy reach of the village."

Outside bowling success largely eluded the Club in 1982 although for the second successive year Ruth Bown, Peggy Rutherford, Kay Kerley and Vi Hatch reached the NHWBA Fours Final. This time, however, they succumbed to defeat by Cove. Sheila Spencer and Mary Garrett reached the County Divisional Final and

Mary also featured prominently in the Club Finals losing 21-14 to Nancy Goosey in the Novice Singles but triumphing 21-4 against Doris Reed in the ladies' singles. The men's Champion was Bert Butler who defeated Spencer Kerley 21-19 with Frank Tuffs winning the men's novice by 21-16 against Barry Lee. The open mixed pairs, for the "Rutherford Bowl" was won by Nancy and Derek Goosey who beat Vi Hatch and Basil Grey 26-14.

1982 is, however, best remembered for Oakley's first ever tour and we went all the way to Ayrshire. Based at Troon the party included 18 male and 16 lady players and played a total of six games over the week. At Dundonald, Oakley let by 10 shots at the halfway stage, but Scottish hospitality gradually took its toll on the male members and the match ended in a six



shot defeat. Monday saw the Club visiting Kilmarnock, established in 1740, and the oldest in Scotland (Rabbie Burns played there) to play a 7 rink mixed game but after only four ends torrential rain caused the game to be abandoned. Rain also intervened on Tuesday against Kilmarnock Portland. We went indoors and were hammered. Against Townholm it was the ladies who shone. All the Scottish skips and 3's were male but Oakley skips Nancy

Goosey, Vi Hatch and Kay Kerley finished 11 shots up. It was still not enough to win. Thursday saw the Club playing on the Scarpagreen surface at Galston where, despite another defeat, our President beat Scottish international captain Willie Smith 18-12. The final game was against

Troon and here we managed a creditable 118-118 draw winning on four of the seven rinks. Was it coincidence that this, the only game not played in the evening was the only one with no bar? That tour was the first of many successful tours the Club has held over the years. It is remembered, not for the bowling, but for events off the green:

- Our Continental coach. Well, it had been on the Continent. If you sat at the front you needed an umbrella.
- The wonderful hospitality – no Club allowed us to pay for our food.
- The Scottish habit of going off the green every 3 ends for a whisky. Jack Garrett set the record by going off after the first trial end.
- Losing Ernie Hall at Old Kilmarnock.
- The chauvinism. We were the first team to tour Ayrshire and play mixed matches.
- Harry Rutherford, in full Scottish Regalia, at our farewell dinner attended by the Scottish President.
- The Drying out period of up to a week – and I am not referring to waterproofs.

Other notable events in 1982 were:

- The election to membership of Phil and Pearl Richardson, both of whom would subsequently serve with distinction, as President.
- The first turf being laid in November 1982
- Ernie and Molly Hall donating the raffle drum, built by Ernie and still in use today as is the flag which was also bought in 1982.

