

Buckland Bowling Club

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History

The Buckland Bowling Club Inc was incorporated in 1922.

A small group of Buckland men joined forces to form the club as they set about creating the nucleus of an amenity of which the Buckland District is justifiably proud.

It all started at what was then the local dairy factory, the common meeting place for farmers in those early days, yet still standing only a hefty stone's throw away from the bowling green. One morning, whilst awaiting their turn to weigh in their cream supplies, the late Robert King and Andy Shaw were discussing the sale of sections in George Street, as it was known then, and owned by the late George Hill. It was, in their opinion, an ideal site for a lawn bowling green, thoughts of which both men had been turning over in their minds for some time previously.

Both were men of action. Robert King, as soon as he arrived home from the factory, harnessed up his old grey mare in the family gig, called to pick up Andy Shaw and away they went to seek further support for a local bowling club. Within a couple of hours, they had the late Ebenezer Allan, Jack Hamilton and Walter Jefferis in full agreement. These five gentlemen thereupon advanced the sum of 25 pounds each to guarantee a fund to cover the purchase price of the land, (one hundred and twenty pounds). That same afternoon, they called upon Mr. Hill and with little formality arranged the purchase of the section, no shilly-shallying in those days-they were keen to get on with the job.

At that time, the Buckland village was somewhat isolated from Pukekohe - roads were of heavy metalled surface and suited only to horse drawn vehicles; there were few motor cars - probably the first car in Buckland was that which was purchased by Bob Wright in 1914 with its front of gleaming brass and its hood held firmly in place by leather straps attached to the mudguards.

"At a meeting held in Buckland on Monday last" states the Franklin Times of Friday, March 24, 1922: "was decided to form a bowling club at Buckland. Over 40 members were immediately enrolled and officers were elected for the ensuing year. Well done, Buckland"

This then fixes the date of the inception of the Club as 20th March, 1922. More or less simultaneously with the idea of a bowling club being formed at Buckland came the thought of a croquet club. Mr. and Mrs. Andy Shaw were keen croquet players and suggested the purchase of the adjoining available section to that required for the bowling green, and this was soon done. What better arrangement could there be? Nearly all of the ladies who later became croquet players were wives or mothers of the subsequent members of the bowling club.

Although never registered as such, but because of the more or less combined activities of the two clubs, they were locally referred to as the Buckland Bowling and Croquet Club. (officially, the bowling club was later affiliated to the Northern Waikato Bowling Association, which in 1936, changed its name to Franklin Bowling Association to bring it more in line with the name of the district.

A further change in title took place in 1952 when it joined the Auckland Bowling Centre, (Franklin Sub Centre). In 1979, the Franklin Subcentre gained full Centre status on becoming the Counties Bowling Centre, affiliated to the New Zealand Bowling Association. In 1996, Counties Bowling Centre changed its name to Counties-Manukau Bowls Incorporated.

The construction of the bowling green could not start soon enough. Enthusiasm ran high among the

locals who turned up with their picks, shovels, horse drawn scoops and drays to clear the area of tree and scrub. Bulldozers or other modern high-powered earth moving machinery were undreamed of in those days - Bob Semple had yet to appear in Dominion politics, so it was all "hard yakker" and wheelbarrow stuff and they without pneumatic tyres, mind you.

Thirsts were soon built up by the heavy work involved; Claude Rountree supplied ready relief with liberal doses of his well-known parsnip and rhubarb wines - perhaps served with subtle purpose to attract and hold full attendance at the many working-bees required to complete the job.

After many months the green was completed to the stage where play could commence, all for a total cost of (eighty pounds sterling) (£160). The great day had arrived. Wednesday November 1st 1922 was the gala day of the year. The whole district appeared to have turned up for this great occasion, in addition to the invited representatives of the kindred bowling and croquet clubs in the Franklin area, other dignitaries of the game from further afield. Play went on to the accompaniment of soft music from the Pukekohe Municipal band, which was in attendance - no glaring loudspeakers in those days.

The sumptuous afternoon tea was supplied by the ladies of the croquet club. Seating space was limited to the then small punga hut pavilion and up to three sittings were required to cater for the large crowd that attended. The late Ebenezer Allan, the club's first President was a very colourful personality, marching around the green and through the native bush with a Highland piper close on his heels - vigorously playing that well known lusty tune "Men of Harlech" all far removed from the pop tunes of today.

The science and practice of bowling green management has advanced considerably over 89 years, going from the previous laborious and heavy work to more scientific methods and equipment. Think back to that heavy, water filled roller that took two or three men to push; the modern roller has the comfort of a seat for the greenkeeper who can roll a green in a few minutes. The computerised automatic watering system installed by the club in 1984 was another advancement, saving many hours spent in shifting irrigation equipment.

The composition of bowling green turf has similarly advanced over the years. Grass species, mainly brown top and chewings fescue prevailed for almost 60 years but now largely displaced by weed species such as cotula and starweed. An all weather turf is now the latest innovation for bowling greens and it is possible that the Buckland club will, in due course, progress to that type of playing surface.

In March 1972, the club celebrated its 50th Golden Jubilee year but regrettably, most unusual wet weather for that time of year caused the special tournament arranged to mark the event to be abandoned. However, a social luncheon was held on the following week-end, in conjunction with the members of the Buckland Croquet Club who were also celebrating their own 50th Jubilee. To mark the bowling club's 50th Jubilee year, a concrete block wall, now referred to as the Jubilee Wall, was erected to replace a hedge growing on the club's southern boundary. Built mainly from voluntary labour, this structure cost \$600 with something like 1000 blocks set. A plaque inscribed with the name of the club set in position on the wall at its main entrance.

Official club colours have changed over the years. 1922-1952 Navy blue blazer with gold monogram on the pocket. 1952 - 1979, Navy blue blazer and tie - Auckland Bowling Centre. 1979- Brown blazer with brown and gold striped tie - Counties Bowling Centre and now, Counties-Manukau Bowls. 1979- The Buckland club was the venue for the Official opening of Counties Bowling Centre that was formed that year. representatives of the Auckland, Northland and Waikato bowling centres and the 21 clubs who formed the new centre were present at that opening. Bob Jarrett and Jim McConachie, both members of the Buckland club, were President and Secretary/Treasurer, respectively of the new Centre in its inaugural year.

Approximately 500 bowlers have, collectively, been members of Buckland Bowling Club during its first 89 years. Its present membership is 64.

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Millennium MEMORIES

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the best greens if not the best in
countries.

I have had a ring made from
the gold buttons that my Grandmother
won over the years at croquet yes
they were gold.

I hope this is of some help
for you with your research.

Regards

Louise Worthington

577 B. Buckland Rd

RD2 Putokhu.

15-7-2013.

To Bruce Hearnley

This information has been taken from
a brochure that was put together for
the Buckland Bowling Clubs Golden Jubilee
1922 - 1972.

My Grandmother, Mrs. A. King & Mrs. J. Burtcher
were foundation members of the Buckland
Croquet Club, Croquet played a big part
in their lives.

I can remember just when daughters
and daughter in laws of the members
started up the Buckland women's Bowling Club
they were so disappointed they thought it
was not very lady like for women to
play bowls. We have had few
generations of our family playing bowls
over the years at Buckland, we are now
struggling for women members all too
busy working or looking after grandchildren
But as you have seen we still have some of



MESSAGE FROM THE BUCKLAND CROQUET CLUB

In contributing to the Buckland Bowling Club's Jubilee Brochure we do so with pride and satisfaction in the knowledge that we too celebrate our own Jubilee in 1972 and now look back over the past fifty years.

We have endeavoured to summarise, in chronological order, the history of the Buckland Croquet Club, its personalities and notable events right up to late 1971 when this brochure went into print. In such a condensed form as this message is, it is not possible to give a complete coverage of events, but suffice to say there has been many that bear recording; thus:

1922—After receiving coaching from Mr and Mrs A. Shaw on their private croquet lawn for a few months, a group of Buckland ladies held a meeting at Mrs Shaw's home on September 19th, 1922 at which it was unanimously decided that a croquet club be formed at Buckland. The following ladies were present at that meeting: Mesdames W. Jeffries, Brown, Bilkey, Bullock, Ward, Stringer, King, Horne, Shaw, Leighton, Greenway, Richings, Hewitt, Butcher, McPherson and Nosworthy (a visitor from Pukekohe who came along to help). Mrs Greenway was voted to the chair for the meeting).

The following officers were elected at that inaugural meeting:

President: Mrs A. Shaw.

Vice-Presidents: Mesdames A. King and A. Hewitt.

Secretary: Mrs Butcher.

Committee: Mesdames A. Horne, Bullock, Greenway, McPherson, Leighton, Ward and Stringer.

Members: Mesdames J. Danes, Cooper, R. Wright, Chitty, Griffin, F. Rae, G. Pulman, R. G. Deed, R. Seeley, J. Barber, J. Bodley, T. Holland, Jeffries, Snr., Mrs Heath (Swan), Misses Jeffries, Whitburn and Piggot.

Non-playing Members: Mesdames Tonkin, Neal, N. Jamieson, B. Graham, F. McKean, J. Greenwood and Miss Wilcox.

The annual subscription was fixed at 5/- per member and it was resolved that all monies collected be handed over to the Buckland Bowling Club which had, that year, been formed.

Also resolved that the croquet greens be established next to those of the Bowling Club.

On vacating Mrs Shaw's private lawn the Croquet Club presented Mrs Shaw with a mallet bearing a silver plate, suitably inscribed, as a token of appreciation of Mr and Mrs Shaw's help. (Now, fifty years later, Mrs Goode — Mr and Mrs Shaw's daughter — plays a champion game of croquet with her mother's mallet).

The Club was officially opened on Wednesday, November 1st, 1922 — the same day as the Bowling Club — amid splendour and excitement — afternoon tea was served to all in the then punga whare hut which served as the bowling club's first pavilion. This primitive, round structure possessed amazing seating capacity and remained in use for nearly ten years.

Fund raising events such as gala days, card evenings, dances etc., provided the means for acquiring further equipment for the Club and also material for the erection of shelters which took the form of pergolas, covered with a variety of attractive flowering creepers.

The Tuakau Croquet Club also opened in 1922. Mr Tonkin, of Buckland, presented a silver cup for Buckland-Tuakau inter-club competition. A lack of knowledge of the basic rules of the game did not deter the beginners, as most of the players were, from thoroughly enjoying themselves, regardless of who won. We had a lot of fun. Mesdames C. K. Lawrie, Fitness and Nosworthy, of Pukekohe, kindly came along to referee.

1925—Club opened its own bank account. Mrs C. Butcher was appointed honorary Treasurer.

Paid Bowling Club the sum of £20 to £25 per year and extra donations received towards mower expenses and general improvements.

As the result of good coaching and practice the standard of play gradually improved, the Club then joined the South Suburban Croquet Association, playing inter-club with Tuakau, Pukekohe, Papakura, Clevedon, Manurewa and later Patumahoe, Karaka and Mauku.

Travelling was a problem in those days — no buses in the district and trains running at most inconvenient times for croquet ladies. Mr McClean's taxi was often hired at the rate of 30/- per trip for six passengers, including a wait of three hours while a game was played. The trip to Waiuku was a real day's outing—leave Buckland by train at 7 a.m., wait at Paerata for one hour for the Waiuku train to arrive, eventually getting to Waiuku mid-morning. Play would take three hours, then afternoon tea, and homeward bound — a long wait at Helvetia, then what seemed to be a longer one at Paerata again, eventually getting back to Buckland at 6.30 p.m. Husbands, upon asking where we had been all day could only be told, "we have been riding in the Waiuku express".

Later on, no more trains for the "B" team of four — they travelled in style in Mr Robert Wright's shining model T Ford. The Club, being affiliated to the Auckland Croquet Association, received annual visits from members of the Auckland Executive Committee and these visits were returned.

1928—Club well established with 22 keen playing members, four good lawns and a credit balance. Gold Stars, presented by Mrs R. Wright, provided keen competition among "B" players.

Gold Buttons, presented by Miss Piggott and Mrs Jeffries similarly encouraged the "A" grade players. Some foundation members left the district from time to time, but were replaced by new members joining the Club, this maintaining membership at a strong level. Some members reached championship standard of play and entered in Auckland Association Competitions, often getting through to the finals. (Mrs L. Middlemiss, of Pukekohe, several times New Zealand Champion, started her croquet career at Buckland in 1943 and still offers her help, if required, to raise our standard of play). Children were no deterrent or handicap for mothers wishing to play croquet. Do you remember . . . ? Mrs Heath putting Gwen to sleep under the big puriri tree.

. . . Alwyn Seeley dissecting a grasshopper looking for its eardrums.

. . . Steve Danes and Leslie McPherson dancing a haka on a table in the punga whare pavilion.

. . . Kevin Deed sleeping in the shade of the lovely laurel hedge.

. . . Mrs R. G. Deed proudly introducing her pretty little grand-daughter, Phyllis.

. . . Nita Dyer, Gay Heatly and Kerry Francis, three little girls playing with their dolls in the shade.

Buckland Club entertained eight players from the Hamilton area.

1929—Mesdames Rae and Ward, both foundation members, farewelled upon leaving the district.

1930—"B" team won the Association Cup and entertained all competing teams.

1931—Upon the recommendation of the Buckland Bowling Club the Croquet Club accepted the arrangement of a five-year renewable lease at a peppercorn rental of 1/- per year.

Bowling and Croquet Clubs held a combined Ball, the admission charge being Gents 2/6 and Ladies 1/- each.

Mrs Jeffries, Snr., was elected Club's first Patron. Club held an open tournament.

1933—Tea lady engaged for duties in the kitchen. Annual subscriptions set at £1/5/0 per member. Mrs R. Deed elected Patron of the Club.

1935—Club held open tournament.

1936—Mesdames Bullock and Hambrook, two champion players, left the district, following a farewell and presentation of gifts.

1939—Buckland Croquet Club won Council Cup. Mrs A. Shaw, the Club's first President, passed away. A farewell gathering held and presentation of gift to Mrs E. Allan.

1942—Mrs A. Wright made a Life Member. Interesting letter from Mr J. King, on active service overseas, brought along and read by Mrs King.

1944—Croquet Club Inc. conferred with bowlers re confirmation of peppercorn rental of 1/- per annum.

1945—Mrs A. Pratten and Mrs Cliff Deed joined the Club—two most valuable members.

1947—Joined with Bowlers in Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

1948—Mr A. G. F. Ross, N.Z. Champion croquet player, visited Buckland Club. Members paid 7/6 per hour for advanced coaching.

1950—Buckland won S.S.C. Assn. Cup. Held a celebration in the Buckland Hall entertaining the A and B teams from each Club and S.S.C. Association present. This marked the end of the S.S.C. Association.

Lawrie Rose Bowl presented by Mrs C. K. Lawrie for competition between Buckland and Pukekohe. Won first time by Buckland.

1951—Buckland won Council Cup. Mrs Walker, an executive member for 20 years, a life member, Club President for three years and honorary Secretary for six years, left the district.

1952—Franklin Croquet Association formed, becoming independent, with headquarters at Pukekohe.

1953—Annual subscription raised to £3/3/0 per member, no entry fee collected.

1954—Two foundation members, Mesdames R. G. Deed, Club Patron, and Richings, passed away.

1958—Bowlers used three rinks of croquet lawn.

1959—Mr and Mrs W. Sparrow (Mr Pratten's sister and brother-in-law) of England, spent many months with Mr and Mrs Pratten, taking a great interest in bowls and croquet. A time of change — No. 2 bowling green vacated by Croquet Club. Croquet Club pavilion moved to present site, some trees removed and croquet lawn extended. Club acknowledged their appreciation to Messrs. Arthur Pratten and Descar Deed for work done in effecting changes and improvements.

1960—Mrs D. Brewster, a capable member for 20 years, re-married and left the district. Exchanged greens with bowlers for part of season.

1961—Lost two very good members, Patron Mrs Butcher, foundation member and first Secretary and Treasurer, and active executive member for 37 years, Secretary for five years, President four years, Treasurer 30 years and Life Member; also Mrs Swan, 37 years as a member, 30 years on executive, a Past President, Treasurer and for many years Green Superintendent.

1964—Bowling Club's new pavilion opened. Croquet Club gave six tables and 50 chairs to the value of £132. An interesting letter from Mrs Pratten, who was on a visit to England, stated sailing home on the 6th August.

1966—Mrs Wright elected Club Patron. Mr Sparrow, on a return visit to New Zealand, presented the Club with a beautiful silver cup, in memory of his late wife; presented cup to first winner, Mrs Cliff Deed. Sutherland Shield, presented by Mrs H. Sutherland, won by Mrs A. King.

1971—After nearly 50 years of ups and downs, one of the saddest blows was the passing of Mrs A. Pratten, a very dear and esteemed member for 25 years and a Life Member. During the period that Mr and Mrs Pratten have been with us so many things just got done — now we realise by whom.

A foundation member, Mrs Holland, still takes an interest in Club affairs but does not play now-a-days. Two non-playing members, Mrs N. Jamieson and B. Graham still maintain an interest in club activities.

Thus has ended just on 50 years of enjoyable companionship in beautiful surroundings at a location which the residents of Buckland surely regard as a real asset to the district.

On behalf of the members of the Buckland Croquet Club we congratulate the Buckland Men's Bowling Club on attaining its 50th Jubilee year and to place on record the close and happy relationship that has existed between our two clubs during the years reviewed.

—Mrs R. Seeley, President, 1971-72.

—Mrs E. A. King, Secretary, 1971-72.

Editor's Note:

Our congratulations to Mesdames Seeley and King, both foundation members of the Buckland Croquet Club, yet still playing an active part in its affairs by holding leading office during its Jubilee Year. Mrs King has a unique and notable record of service to her Club — a member for 50 years, President for four years, Secretary for 36 years, also a Life Member, has missed only two season's openings and one annual meeting during that period.

We regret the recent death of Mrs N. Jamieson which occurred a short while after these notes were prepared and our sympathy is extended to her family.



2013 Croquet was played in the pentarque area