

# 73 years of Stonehouse bowling

**A WAY back in 1900, members of Stonehouse Bowling Club decided that the time for change had come.**

by **ROBERT CAMPBELL**

While the club, formed in 1857, had compared well in competition with neighbouring clubs, the green, situated in Green Street, was not really up to a reasonable standard, and the clubhouse was only slightly larger than a garden hut.

A meeting of members was called on May 3 to discuss the formation of a new club and green, and before the business closed William Jackson, the baker, was appointed secretary of the new Stonehouse Bowling Club, and with a lot of work on his hands.

A week later, the officebearers were elected: President, A. Borland; vice-president, Walter Millar; secretary, William Jackson; assistant secretary, Thomas Wilson; treasurer, John Miles; and a committee comprising Thomas Wilson (Cross), John Leith, James Leith, R. Murray, H. Cuthbertson and William Small.

The annual subscription was fixed at 10/-, and plans were made to meet the cost of the new green.

Later, it was decided to ask members to take fl shares in the club, and soon £104 was raised by this means. Meanwhile, no stone was left unturned in their efforts to raise cash, and some members were even selling toffee and tablet in the village.

Early in January, 1901, the plunge was taken, and the club agreed to accept an offer by Daniel Leslie, of Glasgow, to construct a green and clubhouse on a site at Vicar's Road. The work was completed by mid-summer, but by then it was too late in the season, and arrangements were made for the green to be formally opened the next year.

## GREAT DAY

The great day arrived in May, 1902, when a very proud company of members assembled at Vicar's Road to hear Lady Lockhart, wife of Sir Graeme Alexander Lockhart, Bt, declare the green open.

The total cost of the green, clubhouse and equipment was £732, and by dint of much hard work, yes, and a lot of sacrifice too, there was enough cash by this time to meet the bill and have fl left over. The new club was in business!

It soon proved to be a justly famous one. With a membership of around 35, the Hozier Cup was won in 1903 against strong opposition, and again in 1904. The Glasgow v. Lanarkshire Trophy was won in 1906, the middle ward in 1909. Then came the really big one when a rink comprising John Jackson (Hill Road), Robert Jackson, Tom Cochrane and Archie Thomson (skid), returned in triumph to Stonehouse, having won the Scottish Rink Championship. Soon, however, war clouds were gathering, and on the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, the decision was taken that, to keep up morale, the green would remain open. Although play was on a restricted basis, the members were again gathering cash for a good cause, and £212 was raised for the Red Cross, and for the entertain-

ment of wounded soldiers and sailors.

When the war ended, the club gradually returned to normal, and in 1924, looking to the future, purchased their ground, which was on lease, for £100. This outlay was met almost entirely by voluntary donations from members.

The club broke new ground in 1927, when the ladies' section was formed. Mrs R. Craig and Mrs R. Thomson, became the first secretary and treasurer respectively. The section was soon playing its part in club affairs, and their standard of bowling was of a high order. For some time, the club members had been aware that the original clubhouse was too small for their needs and in 1928 it

was decided to demolish it and build one which would accommodate the increasing membership.

Club member, Mr Gavin H. Thomson played a major part in this project. Graciously, he drew up plans for the construction of the clubhouse, and in 1929 the new building was officially opened by Mrs John Naismith of Spittal.

The cost for those days was high, £608, but the club made special efforts to meet the cost, and were largely indebted to the ladies section for the fact that, by 1934, the expenditure had been met. The new premises were greatly admired and

provided by the Black Bull Hotel, and with a sturdy group of members between the shafts, the victors were paraded through the streets and up to the clubhouse to receive another rousing reception.

The ladies' section was in business with a vengeance, and to prove it was no isolated feat, they won the S.W.E.A. final in 1938, this time carrying off the R. G. Lawrie Trophy.

The club remained during the Second World War and those who stayed at home raised £218 for war charities. When hostilities ceased, and members returned from the forces, the club resumed full

part in guiding its affairs. William Jackson—first secretary of the club, and whose hard work was largely responsible for getting the club off the ground so quickly. He emigrated to Canada in 1905.

John Miles—former president and treasurer for the first 15 years. Robert Leggate joined the club in 1906 and was assistant secretary for 11 years. An outstanding player, he won the Lanarkshire Singles Championship and was club champion twice.

Gavin H. Thomson joined the club in 1908 and was treasurer and green convener for many years. He was always an authority in the club, and prepared the plans for the clubhouse which opened in 1929. Alex. McCrimmon was one of the most outstanding players in the club's history and won the championship nine times. A Scottish international, he played against American, and South African teams.

John Jackson (Hill Road) was appointed greenkeeper in 1912, and held the post until 1946. Due to his skill, the green was recognised as one of the best in Lanarkshire.

His imperturbable nature was demonstrated when a member, noted for his carping nature, shouted "Hey, Johnnie, this is a right twisted rink I'm playing on." He replied quietly,

## TWISTED

Whiteleaw, Mitchell Sorbie, Logie Armstrong, John H. Thomson, Tom Hamilton and Bob Burns.

Inevitably perhaps, during the many discussions which take place in the clubhouse, the remark is made by one of the "old brigade," "They're no' guid as they used to be."

The question will always remain, of course, but many of the players today have a very impressive record in club and county competitions.

Mention must be made of the three Hamilton brothers: Jimmy—club champion three times in five years and a successful Scottish team skip (now a member of the Strathmore Club in Hamilton).

Jack—twice Lanarkshire singles champion and three times club champion.

Mac—the youngest brother and club champion six times, including a "hat-trick."

Other names which can always be expected to feature in the final stages of club competitions are: Alex. Brodie, a veteran who is still very difficult to beat; Bert Summers, Gilbert McGill, Jock Scott, Peter McMillan, Henry McFarlane and Jimmy Brown, who, on their game, could compete and do well in county and national competitions.

There are many more who form the backbone of the club, and who are just as important in the life of a club.

There are still the faithful servants who give their time freely to the club—Jimmy Black, who puts in many long hours behind the scenes, and much of the credit for the smooth running of the club must go to him.

Willie Hamilton, treasurer, who steers the club smoothly and safely through its increasingly complicated financial affairs, and whose advice has been invaluable.

The club is also greatly indebted to the ladies' section for the generous donations of cash each season.

## HOT MEALS

On the practical side, match days would be extremely poor affairs without the help of the ladies who set beautiful tables and serve hot meals to visitors and members.

Without them it would be almost impossible to run the very successful Invitation Pairs Tournament which calls for a non-stop supply of hot meals from 9 o'clock in the morning until 9 o'clock at night.

The heart of the bowling club is, of course, the green which is still one of the finest in the county, and the credit for this must go to Willie McElihan and Alex. Cook, who devoted long hours and skill to keeping it in good condition.

The borders surrounding the green are still a credit to them and on summer evenings when the club ties are in full swing, older residents in the village are free to enjoy a quiet seat in attractive surroundings and follow with great interest the cut and thrust of the play.

The club, throughout its existence has never been wholly concerned with its own activities and over the years has contributed some hundreds of pounds to various deserving causes.

The latest episode was logged recently when the club announced plans for an extension to the clubhouse to cater for the needs of more than 100 members in the men's section and 40 in the ladies' section.

The plans included an entrance hall, an enlarged main section, locker and committee rooms, a new kitchen, and ladies' and gent's retiring rooms.



Beeble drive organised by Stonehouse Violet Football club committee was held in the Public Hall on Monday. The winners were Margaret Miller, Mrs Murray and Mrs Dunsmore and the event raised £17 for funds.

David W. W. Barr, 1 Dunavon Crescent, Strathaven, was elected a district officer of the District Grand Priory of Strathclyde. The Order of the Temple at a meeting held in Glasgow. David is a member of Lodge St. Andrew

Thrill sale is being held by Girl Guides Association in the Guide Hall, Academy Street, Larkhall on Saturday at 10 a.m.

Blackwood School football team are top of the Leamnahgow District Schools Football Association League. They have won their last six games.



Bowling Club members and clubhouse of 1908.