

STANDARDS & ETIQUETTE

Standards.

From the start of Ashburne Bowling Green the committee were insistent on strict adherence to the rules. Of these, great stress was laid on payment of subscriptions and, 60 years ago, it was the practice to refer arrears to the Corporation's debt collector. The reason may have been twofold — (i) it was the method used by the treasurer, Alfred Ricketts, in his professional job as a rating officer and (ii) it avoided mixing his personal bowling relationships with the unpleasantness of demanding money.

The method was largely effective, possibly because a member would not want the neighbours to see an official collector calling. Only a recalcitrant member's default would be referred to the club's solicitor.

The 1922 subscription of £2. 2s. 0d. was quite significant when a wage-earner getting £3 a week was regarded as being in a good job, although it was mostly the better-off business and professional men who joined the club. Even so, it was a period of intense post-war depression with living standards that make conditions in the recent economic recession look like booming prosperity.

All the early photographs show players wearing normal suits. Decorum on the green was rigorously enforced and, after a member removed his jacket leaving his braces on view he received a severe reprimand from the committee. No one was allowed on the greens without "slips" (flat-soled rubber overshoes). Although proper shoes were encouraged, a supply of slips and club woods were available in the pavilion, for many years, for the use of occasional players. Regulation blazers were first mooted in 1922 and, with the assent of the local Council, the Borough coat of arms was adopted as the club's badge. However it was not until 1938 that a club tie was selected when, as the club had more than one outfitter in the membership, designs were submitted under code numbers. The winning design was submitted by Mr. Charles S. Watts whose 51 years' record of membership may well be unique. Starting in 1926, it included 6 years as treasurer, 2 as secretary, 1 as president and a season as captain. He donated a cup for the competition bearing his name and was elected a life member in 1963.

One development which reflected changing social conditions was the transition from cycle sheds (which were being renewed up to 1946) to car spaces and, after the fire, a chestnut tree had to go despite an appeal from the Regency Society to preserve it.

Gambling.

The committee were always zealous to preserve the good reputation of the club and in 1944 agreed to a stern warning "that they were resolved to stamp out unreservedly any gambling within the club". However in 1963 it was decided to give

a trial installation of a "fruit machine", a second one being added shortly afterwards. At the subsequent annual general meeting there were several objectors on the grounds that the machines were unethical and noisy, and that the social side of the club had deteriorated. Consideration was deferred to the next bowlers' meeting in March 1964 when Mr. A. Knott, Chairman of the finance committee presented the following figures:

INCOME	<i>per week</i>
	£
Subscriptions	23
Billiards	5
Bar	<u>20</u>
	48
Fruit machines	<u>13</u>
	<u>£61</u>
EXPENDITURE	
Wages and insurance	33
Upkeep of grounds	10
Lighting and heating	4
Rates	5
Cleaning, telephone, post, printing and stationery, insurance	4
	<u>£56</u>

Without the machines there would be a weekly deficit of £8, with them a surplus of £5. Opposition weakened and, on a show of hands, it was agreed to continue with the machines.