



Driv'n by spheres

By Daphne Chamberlain

Muswell Hill Bowls Club is 100 years old this year. Even though centenarians are getting sprightlier all the time, we can't bring you an interview with anyone who played in that first season, but we do know that the green was laid with Cumberland turf, which is the best surface there is for bowls.



Children at Muswell Hill Bowls Club. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

The original keeper toiled away with a hand-mower. His successors have three motor-mowers, a tining machine, a scarifier, a strimmer and an automatic watering system to play with, but it's still a labour of love.

Those first players certainly did not include women. They weren't allowed to play at all until 1935, and only became full members in the last 20 years. Now, I wouldn't exactly say they run the show, but let's say it would be very hard to imagine a non-integrated club.

Street cred

The founder members were not your men in the street, either. They were all business and professional people, including Muswell Hill's most famous player, James Carruthers, an international for 19 years, who was regarded as the best player in England between the wars.

Since World War II, though, members have come from all walks of life. Our local bowls club is certainly not snobbish, as previous articles in *THE ARCHER* have testified. It's a friendly place, with beginners mixing democratically with quite a few members who play rather well.

Carruthers was not the only international, and there have always been a sprinkling of county players. However, bowls is not the only sport for this year's president, Harry Hicks. He was a long-time athletics administrator and an outstanding athlete, running distances from 800 metres to the marathon. His best year was in 1956, when he won the AAA marathon, and competed in the Melbourne Olympics.

On the ball

If that seems a long time ago to some readers, the message that all club members would really like to get across is that this game is for all ages. International players now are young men and women, and Muswell Hill have pioneered the introduction of bowls to school classes.

It's more than likely that some people still don't know where the club is hiding. It's concealed between the houses of King's Avenue and Tetherdown, with the entrance in King's Avenue. The area is bound to remain as a sports-ground. It's up to the youth of the 21st century to make sure that it's used.

For details, contact 020 8368 6605.

FORUM NEWS

By Daphne Chamberlain

Update from the Finchley Forum meeting:

Mystery of the All Saints trees

It has been impossible to identify the person causing damage to the trees outside All Saints, Durham Road.

Brian Reynolds, Director of Social Affairs, reported that the matter had been investigated, but no hard and fast evidence had been found.

He has written to the church, pointing out that it is their duty to replace the trees.

Fallows Close parking problems

Some Fallows Close residents complained that when the Old Barn was hired out, it was often impossible to park outside their own front doors.

Kathy McGuirk promised that they would be included in any future consultations, and arranged to speak with them later.

Hopping with Delight!

For the second year running, The Windsor Castle has been credited with a top place in the "Barnet in Bloom" competition. Last years first place has been followed by a very creditable second place in the "Best Blooming Pub" category.

Brian Davies, who designs and cares for the great display expressed delight with the high ranking of his efforts yet again. Speaking of his love for plants and flowers he cites contrast, and variation as being the driving force behind his designs. "Each basket display follows a common theme" he says, "but is unique in its own way".

Off the Wall

One adventurous step included planting courgettes in a basket, which whilst unusual, worked well. "I just like to try something, and if it works, great, if not, it doesn't matter," states a pragmatic Brian.

One aspect that astonished

Brian is that he has used Hops as part of his display, which, considering the flowers bedeck a pub, should not be that unusual in such a setting. Apparently, though, this is a rare enough idea to draw comment.

Whilst pleased with the award, Brian's greatest pleasure is derived from the comments of passers-by who let him know how much pleasure they get from his work. "That's the greatest thing about my work," he said as he gave thanks to the Windsor Castle for giving him the opportunity to practise his art.

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LETTERS

War correspondence

Dear Sir,

Does anyone know of a Flight/Sergeant Dennis Atkinson, navigator RAFVR, 1396885, who lost his life on the night of 30/31 March 1944? He was the son of Harry and Winifred R. Atkinson from East Finchley, though I have read also that he may have lived in Kentish Town.

He was flying on Lancaster Mk11 LL622 KO-J of 115 Sqd RAF Witchford. My great-uncle, Sgt Frank Hawksworth, was a WOP/Gunner on the same aircraft, and my family and I are trying to trace relatives and friends of the other crew members.

These brave young men, on their first and only mission as one crew, were in a raid on Nuremburg, which has gone into history as a total failure in some quarters.

The RAF lost over one hundred aircraft on that night. My great-uncle and his fellow crew members lost their lives on the return leg from Schweinfurt, having bombed - by mistake and under pathfinder guidance - the wrong city.

Unknown to the crews, strong winds had pushed the bomber stream off course from their intended target. LL622 is understood to have been shot down over the famous battlefield at Waterloo, and the crew's bodies RIP in Brussels town cemetery.

In recent months, my father and I have had a commemorative painting commissioned, entitled "Journey into the Unknown", which shows LL622 flying over Ely. Also, I have made contact with other crew members' families, and have exchanged stories about our relatives' time in the RAF.

My family and I would very much like to contact relations or friends of Dennis Atkinson, and hopefully perhaps meet up with them.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Hawksworth,
 4, The Meadows,
 Howden,
 East Yorkshire, DN14 7DX
 Tel. 01430 432906

Mis-represented

Dear Editor

I was disappointed to read, in your report on a robbery in the High Street, the reported comments of the police that the group carrying out the robbery were "an untraceable gang of illegal immigrants".

If the gang were indeed "untraceable", then there is no basis on which an assumption that the culprits were "illegal immigrants" could be made. If, as the report goes on to say, they were either of Eastern European origin, or spoke in Arabic (contradictory, surely?), then they could equally have been British citizens, visitors or "legal" immigrants.

I would like to have seen *THE ARCHER*, a paper representing a diverse, multicultural community, questioning this comment. By not doing so, you are in danger of perpetuating the caricature of the criminal "illegal immigrants" and "asylum seekers" presented by some of the tabloid press. You are better than that!

Yours sincerely
Nick Starling
 Durham Road, N2.

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