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1906-2011 TONBRIDGE BOWLING CLUB

Anecdotes from the Club records.

1906- The first meeting of Tonbridge Cricket Club members interested in setting up a bowls club was held in the spring at the Angel Hotel. It was agreed to establish the Tonbridge Bowling Club (TBC) and that the headquarters be at the Angel Hotel. A suitable area had been allocated for a green which was laid out and prepared by the cricket club groundsman. Our green was kept in order by the Tonbridge Cricket Club and no person could become a member of the Bowling Club unless a member of the Cricket Club. The annual subscription was set at 2/6d per annum and 59 members joined in the first year. Founder members included F W Franks- shopkeeper the first President who opened the green on the 27th April , A Cornell- Jeweller & watchmaker, who was reputed to have been the first owner of a motor car to drive through the High Street just after the turn of the century. W Ede- Confectioner, C Payne- Captain a former Sussex Cricketer and George (Gaffer) Stacey- Headmaster of Tonbridge National School later the Slade school and town councillor. Fixtures in the first season-included Hawkhurst, Pembury, Sevenoaks & Crystal Palace.

1907- At the first Annual General Meeting the Rules of the Club were agreed. The object of the club was the playing of The Game of Bowls strictly in accordance with the laws as adopted by the English, Scottish and London and Southern Counties Bowling Association. New fixtures were arranged with Tunbridge Wells, Westerham and Hythe. The Club open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. except Sundays and Tonbridge Cricket week. Prizes for the Handicap Competition included:- Winner- Pair of bowls in a case. Runners Up- Pair of Bowls. Third- Umbrella and Fourth - Leather bowls case. 59 guests were at the Annual Dinner held also at the Angel Hotel.

1908- 70 members by now. TBC affiliated to the English Bowling Association. The Challenge Cup was presented to the club by the President Mr F W Franks to be awarded to the Club singles champion each year.

1910- The match at Margate was turned down this year, in consequence of the long railway journey. Few could own cars so transport depended on the railway service

1911- Kent County Bowls Association founded 1st March at Angel Hotel. Tonbridge Bowling Club one of the founder clubs.

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