

Dunblane Bowling Club



A brief history about the Club and a look into the past

A bowling club has been in Dunblane from 1822, some 26 years before the first unsuccessful attempt to form a national body for the sport in 1848, and indeed 70 years before the Scottish Bowling Association was founded in 1892.

Where the original green was laid is anecdotal. All evidence seems to point to a green (only 2 rinks) on Kippendavie Estate. There is a photograph that some say was the first green, and others that this is not even Dunblane.

The present green was first laid in the year 1886 with only 4 rinks and was transformed to full size green in 1921.

Extract from Callander Advertiser - Saturday 27th February 27th 1886:

‘Colonel Stirling of Kippendavie having recently, with great liberality, offered to construct, under certain conditions, a bowling green in the Duckburn Park, adjoining the Railway Station.

A meeting of those favourable to forming a Club was held on the evening of 24th inst., when 23 gentlemen attended. After some discussion it was unanimously agreed to form a Club, and the following gentlemen were elected as a Committee to arrange matters with Colonel Stirling, Viz., Messrs. Thomson, R. Cameron, Jas, McNaughton, R.H. Christie, John McGregor, R. Waddell and J. Bruce.

Hitherto we have had nothing better to offer our ever-increasing summer visitors than the many beautiful walks around our ancient ‘CITY’ and as a bowling green has long been a felt want and will add greatly to the attractions of the place, it is hoped that it will be enthusiastically taken up by the inhabitants.

From the strong committee, which has been formed, we can have no doubt of the result.’

Extract from Callander Advertiser - Saturday 10th April 1886:

‘As already intimated some time ago Colonel Stirling of Kippendavie having offered under certain conditions to make a bowling green in Duckburn Park, a public meeting was held at which seven gentlemen were elected as a committee to arrange matters with Colonel Stirling.

Several meetings were held, and everything has been arranged satisfactorily with Colonel Stirling and Mr. Anderson Factor, having met the Committee in the most generous spirit possible.

Mr. Robert Cameron Manufacturer who needless to say performed the duty most gracefully cut the first turf of the new green on Wednesday 7th April.

A few gentlemen were present and enthusiastic speeches were made, acknowledging Colonel Stirling for liberality and public spirit in supplying the long felt want.

The work is now in active progress and will be carried out under the supervision of Mr. Anderson, Factor, which is a guarantee that it will be substantially done, and pushed on with all possible despatch. A curling pond is also in course of construction alongside of the green.’

Extract from Callander Advertiser - Thursday 29th April 1886:

'A public meeting was held in the County Buildings on Friday evening for the purpose of forming a Club, adopting rules and electing office bearers. Mr. R. H. Christie, School Teacher, occupied the Chair.

About 30 gentlemen intimated their desire to become members of the Club.

The following were elected office bearers;

President:	Mr. R. H. Christie
Vice President:	Mr. W. Thomson
Secretary:	Mr. R. Waddle, Watchmaker
Treasurer:	Mr. James McNaughton

Directors:

Messrs. D. C. Blair, John Cramb, Andrew Gray, Robert Cameron, Robert Wedderspoon and B. McLachlan. It is expected that the green will be ready for play about the middle of June.'

Extract from Callander Advertiser - Saturday 18th July 1886:

'The Green was formally opened on Saturday evening 3rd July, when a friendly game was played between teams skipped by Colonel Stirling of Kippendavie and Mr. J. W. Barty of Glenacres respectively. After a very pleasant game, Colonel Stirling's team were declared the winners by five shots.

Mr. Thomson Vice President, in an able speech, declared the green opened, and thanked Colonel Stirling on behalf of all bowlers for his great liberality in providing a green, which promised in every way a thorough success.

Colonel Stirling in replying expressed the gratification it gave him to have it in his power to provide such a healthful recreation for those who were shut up all day in an office, workshop and factory, and wished long life and many a pleasant game to the bowlers. On the call of Mr. Thomson three cheers were enthusiastically given for the gallant Colonel.'

Extract from Callander Advertiser - 4th September 1886:

'The Final tie for a pair of silver mounted bowls gifted by the President was played on Wednesday evening 1st September, between Mr. Peter McLaren and Mr. John Sinclair.

After a very close game the points stood, McLaren 22, Sinclair 18.

Mr. McLaren thus becomes the Champion of the green for the season. He is quite an amateur player, but notwithstanding capital play was shown by both parties during the game which was witnessed by a large number of spectators.'

Extract from Callander Advertiser - 23rd April 1887:

'The first Annual General Meeting of the Dunblane Bowling Club was held on Tuesday evening the 19th April in the County Buildings.

The Chair was occupied by the President Mr. R. H. Christie, Teacher, and there was a large attendance of the members. The Secretary and the Treasurer gave in their reports, which showed the affairs of the Club to be in a satisfactory state.

The following office bearers were elected for the ensuing season: -

President	Rev. J.E. Campbell Colquhoun, of Ledcamerach
Vice – President	Mr. Robert Wedderspoon, Painter
Secretary	Mr. James Dall, Springfield Terrace
Treasurer	Mr. J. McNaughton

Committee of Management:

Messrs. Christie, Waddell, Gray, Williamson, Hunter, McLauchlin and McLaren.

Greenkeeper: Mr. James Wilkie

It is expected the green will be open about the middle of May.'

Extract from Stirling Journal - 12th April 1907:

The Bowling Club have arranged that

'The band of the Naval Reserve under Conductor Mr. McDade will give a performance in the Duckburn Park on Saturday 4th May. There is also to be a Junior five-a-side football match.

The proceeds are to go towards payment of the debts, which have been incurred by the Club during the past winter in re-turfing the bowling green.

Extract from the Stirling Observer - Saturday 7th March 1907:

'Sheriff Court Case

Dunblane Bowlers and Contractor.

An action was raised in the Sheriff Court at Dunblane By Daniel Cramb, gardener, Dunblane, against the Dunblane Bowling Club for £6 15s 10d for extras in connection with the relaying of the Club's bowling green. The green had been raised an inch and quarter above its old level, and the principal part of the account was incurred in connection with this portion of work. The specification stated that the level of the green was to be given by the Master of works, and the club maintained that the pursuer was therefore bound to raise or lower the level of the green accordingly to the level given, but nothing was said about green having to be raised. The pursuer maintained that it was necessary for some one to give a level, and the Master of works had been deputed to do so by the Club, and that the level would be such as to average the level of its former condition.

The Sheriff after taking the proof and hearing parties agents on Wednesday last, decerned against the defenders for £4 18s and expenses, and held that the work charged for was not covered by the specification, but that it was some what overcharged, and he, therefore made a deduction of £1 17s 10d.

Agents for the Pursuer: M. Jeffrey, Solicitor, Dunblane.

Agents for the Defenders: Messrs. McLean and Stewart, Solicitors, Dunblane.'

Extracts from Stirling Observer - Thursday 1st April 1920:

'At the Annual General Meeting of the Dunblane Bowling Club held on Thursday 24th March, a statement was made regarding the proposed new green to be constructed, within Kippenross Grounds, near North Lodge, by Mr. Wilkie.

The Lodge was to be the Green-Keepers house, and Colonel Stirling, was prepared to consider the whole question, very favourably if the capital could be raised.

A small Committee was appointed to attend to certain matters and report to a special Meeting.'

Thursday 19th August 1920:

'As the negotiations with the proprietor of the Kippendavie Estate for a site for a new bowling green at Kippenross, North Lodge, have fallen through, the Bowling Club have agreed to extend the present Green. Last week a number of members who were on holiday, cleared and prepared the site for the extension, and it is expected that the contractor will proceed with the remainder of the work shortly.

Thursday 5th May 1921

'During the winter Dunblane Bowling Green has reconstructed and enlarged their Green at a cost of £700. Over £500 of this has already been met, and a jumble sale on Saturday 30th April realised £63. The green will open on Saturday 7th May. A pavilion has still to be erected as well as a new house for the Greenkeeper.'

Extract from Stirling Journal - 12th May 1921:

'Dunblane Bowling Club's new green was opened on Saturday afternoon, ideal weather prevailed, and there was a large attendance of members.

Mr John Muir, President who declared the green open, referred to many difficulties that the Committee had to overcome before their objective was achieved, and when the new pavilion and green- keeper's house were erected at no distant date their long-cherished hopes would be fully realised.

In conclusion he hoped the members would have many enjoyable games in the two years to come, and that they would have a most successful season.

Mrs. Muir then threw the first jack amid great applause. Councillor Stewart in the name of the members called upon Mrs. Muir to accept a silver jack and stand as a memento of the occasion and Mrs. Muir briefly returned thanks.

The Annual Match President v. Vice President followed with an enjoyable game ending all square. Scores as follows: -

President		Vice President	
John Whyte	10	G. Taylor	13
Wm McCallum	14	M. F. McGregor	4
D. McIlvride	10	D. Stewart	11
A. McCaull	6	D. McGregor	23
James Wilson	19	T. Cree	8
Total	59	Total	59

Prizes for the highest up rink were won by, Messrs. R. McGregor, D. Stirling and C. W. Townsend.'

Minute of Meeting held in Clubhouse on 4th April 1950:

'A meeting was held in the Bowling Club House with the object of forming a Ladies section. The ladies present were Mrs. Bryden, Mrs. Cowe, Mrs. Ferguson, Mrs. Gonnella, Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Sherrington, Mrs. Simpson, Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. Wingate. Mrs. Sherrington read a letter received from Mr. J. McGregor, Secretary of the Bowling Club, and a list of rules, which accompanied same.

Thereafter a Committee of three was appointed as follows: -

President: Mrs. Finlayson, Dundalg
Proposed by Mrs. Bryden, seconded by Mrs. Ferguson

Vice President : Mrs. Wingate, Acredale
Proposed by Mrs. Cowe, seconded by Mrs. Simpson

Secretary/Treasurer: Mrs. Gray
Proposed by Mrs. Sherrington, seconded by Mrs. Purdie

As we were only allowed two rinks on the green, it was agreed to limit membership to 26. It was decided to hold two rink games each week on Tuesday's and Thursday's each player paying 2d per game. A proposal to hold a whist drive in aid of funds was made and it was agreed to hold this in the Clubhouse on the 26th April.'

At a later date it was found necessary to increase the Committee by a further three members, and Mrs. Bryden, Mrs. Purdie and Mrs Sherrington were nominated and elected.

Any additional photographs, mementoes or memorabilia that could be added to this short history would be most welcomed and appreciated.