



FROM FIELDS TO GREENS



Val Donovan

The Centenary of
Graceville Bowls Club
1919-2019

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The Graceville Bowls Club Incorporated

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This history would not have been written without the dedication of the official historian of the Graceville Bowls Club, Jack McLaughlin. For some years now, Jack has been collecting archival items relating to the club, and reading the available Minutes of the meetings since October 1947 and the Annual Reports from 1994 to 2009. With the assistance of Joan Evans he has compiled a valuable resource for the club which identifies important dates and events. Apart from Annual Reports from 1920, the Minutes and other items were only available from 1947 as in that year the committee, in their wisdom, decided that records considered of no value for future reference be destroyed. Thankfully Jack and Joan's endeavours have assisted the author in the compilation of this centenary history.

I wish to acknowledge the Digital Newspaper collection, Trove, of the National Library of Australia which provided valuable primary resource material on the club's early history. The photographs included in this history are from the club's collection, having been donated over the years.

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE
QUEENSLAND

**Foreword from the Governor of Queensland
for 'From Fields to Greens :The Centenary of Graceville Bowls Club 1919-2019'**

'Bias' is a characteristic generally best avoided in vice-regal representatives, however when it comes to support for lawn bowls, and the Graceville Bowls Club in particular, many Queensland Governors have made entirely appropriate exceptions. Though unlike our 'sporting Governor', Sir Leslie Wilson, whose photograph mastering the bias on the Graceville Green during the 1930s features in this publication, I confirm my bias is contained to vocal support for this uplifting Club!

The Club's fortunes may have waxed and waned over the century, however the central role the Club plays in the lives of many residents of Brisbane's West is as proudly asserted today as it was when the Club was formed in 1919.

I was heartened to learn of increasing membership over recent years, albeit following a period of decline. This is a wonderful affirmation of the Club's continuing ability, and particularly that of its dedicated volunteers and Committee, to provide something of real value to members, whether that is through friendly competition, the opportunity for exercise, or simply the ability to enjoy the Club's convivial atmosphere in the company of like-minded people.

I congratulate the Club on its successes and its longevity. I further commend the Club for honouring its proud history through this highly worthwhile publication, particularly the author, Val Donovan, and the Club's official historian, Jack McLaughlin.

As Governor and Patron of Bowls Queensland, I thank past and present members of the Club for their remarkable contributions to lawn bowls, and for enhancing the well-being of so many Queenslanders. Kaye and I wish you all invigorating centenary celebrations in 2019.

His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC
Governor of Queensland

Early history

Prior to European settlement the natural environment of the area where the Graceville Bowls Club is located was abundant in food and water resources where the Traditional Owners, the Jagera people, followed their hunting and gathering activities and their cultural rituals. The area is close to the Oxley Creek flood plain, being bounded on the east by Oxley Creek, and with eastern and western frontages to the Brisbane River. On 3 December 1823 the explorer John Oxley reported on the rich land on both sides of what he named Canoe River (later Oxley Creek), with swamps and lagoons and dense scrub. On this day near the creek known to Aboriginals as Benarrawa, the explorer 'saw three natives, evidently strangers to white people'.¹

European settlement

White people did not remain strangers for long after that time as they encroached on the surrounding land from the moment the penal settlement was established on 14 September 1824. The convict sawyers were soon at work in the Oxley Creek area as the fine pine trees provided the timber and shingles for the make-shift pioneer houses in the settlement.² It was not until after the closure of the penal settlement in 1842 and the land opened for lease that Thomas Boyland took up acreage either side of Oxley Creek in an area that became known as Boyland's Pocket. He ran sheep and cattle. The

northern area of this lease was sub-divided in 1860 into smaller farming allotments and a land order system introduced to encourage immigrant farmers, such as the families of Alexander Francis and Alexander Boyd.³ They had intended to grow cotton, but this failed and the settlers survived on growing and selling small crops, and for a time sugar was reasonably successful. Boyland's Pocket, later a semi-rural settlement, now embraces the suburbs of Chelmer, Graceville, Sherwood and Corinda which soon became attractive for residential settlement when the railway was opened. The first section from Ipswich to Oxley West, now Sherwood, was opened on 5 October 1874 and was extended on 4 January 1875 to Oxley Point, now Chelmer, adjacent to the site of the present bridge. On 14 June a section was opened from Brisbane to Indooroopilly where the passengers could cross the river by ferry to join the Ipswich train. The last piece of the railway project was the opening of the Albert Bridge on 5 July 1876, which gave passengers a journey from Brisbane to Dalby. With the suburban sub-division of Oxley Point in the 1880s, Graceville Railway Station became operational to serve the new residential area. When Samuel Grimes (MLA Oxley 1878-1902), local supporter of the Ipswich-Brisbane rail link, was asked to name the station he suggested that it be called after his youngest daughter Grace.⁴

The genesis of the Graceville Bowling Club

The land either side of the Graceville Railway Station was sub-divided as Oatlands Estate on 21 November 1895 and Graceville continued to grow as a small semi-rural community.⁵ As such, in 1918 there was a movement, advertised in the *Daily Mail*, to form a bowling club in the western suburbs, no doubt stimulated by the success of the four clubs in the Metropolitan area including the first club to be formed, the Booroodabin Bowls Club in 1888. At that stage bowling clubs were gentlemen's clubs, and those interested were invited to contact Mr Fred Meyer at his GPO address.⁶ The club was founded at a meeting on 11 February 1919 and a meeting of the Graceville Bowling Club was held at the Sherwood Parish Hall on Tuesday 11 March to consider the sites selected by the committee of JK Cannan, EH Macarthur and AA Spowers. It was decided to purchase a suitable piece of ground from TD Fraser of 2 roods 38 perches (2,984 square metres) situated in Wylie Street, about 20 chains (402 metres) from the Graceville Railway Station. Finance for the purchase of land and the formation of the green was to be by the issue of £5 debentures, of which a large number had already been taken up. The annual subscription was fixed at £3 3s. There was to be a limit of 80 members and the foundation membership list was closing on 30 April 1919. The enrolment was 48 at that stage, at which time various committees were formed to deal with rules, grounds and colours.⁷ The Balance Sheet for the year

ending 30 June 1920 indicated that the site in Wylie Street was bought for £300. The club members under the direction of AA Spowers wasted no time in surveying the green and taking levels of the proposed site in anticipation of clearing and excavating the ground.⁸



AA Spowers

Photo courtesy of Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying, acc. no PE 360

At the first general meeting on 6 May 1919 consideration was given to the rules for the club and the election of office bearers. By 16 July it was reported that the contractor, MB Christiansen, had practically completed the excavation and forming of the green with couch grass and the Council was hopeful with such progress that the green would be ready for play by the end of the year. AC Raff was elected the first Honorary Life Member of the club at this meeting as a tribute to his work in connection with the plans and specifications of the laying down of the green and his supervision of the project. The membership of 80 had almost been reached.⁹ As an indication of the social status of the newly formed club, Sir Pope Alexander Cooper accepted the office of Patron of the Sherwood Bowling Club, no doubt a misnomer as the club was then situated in the Sherwood Shire. His letter of acceptance, with a cheque of £2 2s was sent from his Judges' Chambers on 19 September 1919. Sir Pope had a chequered career as a judge and politician, was the attorney-general from 1881 to 1883, appointed Chief Justice of Queensland in 1903, knighted in 1904, and deputised as governor and lieutenant-governor on a number of occasions. At the time of accepting the position with the Graceville Bowling Club he was Chancellor of The University of Queensland. He lived and died at Chelmer.¹⁰

JUDGES' CHAMBERS,
BRISBANE.

19th Sep. 19.

Sir Pope Cooper has much
pleasure in accepting the office
of Patron of the Sherwood
Bowling Club & hopes to play
on your green in the near
future.

It incloses his cheque
for £2.2. in aid of the
funds of the Club.

^{Yr}
The Secretary
Sherwood Bowling Club.

Letter from Sir Pope Alexander Cooper 1919

AA Spowers, who was then the Surveyor-General of Queensland, was the first president and two other noted foundation members were TM Hall, Member of the Legislative Council (1906 to 1922) and AC Elphinstone, Member of the Legislative Assembly, and the Member for Oxley (1918 to 1929). FGR Meyer and S Sowden filled the positions of the first secretary and treasurer until March 1920. The list of members who provided debentures for the foundation of the club, from £5 to £100, totalled 71, with four candidates on the list for 1 January 1920. One non-member, Mrs Blackman, provided £50; women were not able to gain membership at this time.¹¹

The prediction that the green, which was completed at a cost of £500, might be ready for play by the end of 1919 was optimistic as a severe drought caused a major setback, checking the growth of the grass. This did not deter members from competing with other clubs, as in December 1919 members from the newly formed club journeyed to Southport where they beat two rinks from that club.¹² The green was not formally opened for play until Saturday 29 May 1920 when four rinks were in use. The delay in the use of the green proved advantageous as the club was able to organise the erection of the clubhouse. The plans for this were drawn by GM Colledge, a well-known Toowong bowler, and building operations were supervised by G Lane. The pavilion cost £615 as at 30 June 1920.¹³ The official opening of the club by the President of the Queensland Bowling

Association [QBA] AP Greenfield, took place on Saturday 24 July 1920 when a large number of ladies and visitors gathered on the banks and were entertained to afternoon tea. The green was opened in the 'customary way' by Mr Greenfield 'putting down a bowl'.



Clubhouse with players c.1925 – note the blazer

At the opening it was reported that the green of seven rinks was in excellent condition and that the clubhouse was 'a solid and artistic structure containing the usual appointments and commanding a most glorious panorama'. The membership was a healthy 75 as at 30 June 1920. There were eight bowling clubs in Brisbane at this time, two being in the Oxley electorate. In 1921 the population of Graceville was 747.¹⁴



Cheer squad c.1925

In 1921 the club's status was again enhanced by the acceptance of an honorary membership by Sir Matthew Nathan, the Queensland Governor from 1920 to 1925. He was also Patron of the club from 1921 to 1923. On a visit to the club in 1925 the Governor made the following comments relating to his participation in the play that Saturday:

I have come to the conclusion that one can't play bowls with any satisfaction to oneself ... or to one's partner without bias. So, after making an honest attempt to eliminate bias from my bowls, and finding they took to wandering over neighbouring greens, as well as in parts of my own, I have come to the conclusion that, not only is it not a Governor's duty to play bowls, but it is this governor's duty not to play them.¹⁵



The Clubhouse 1933

On 10 December 1921 the club held their inaugural Cockatoo versus Redbill Series as a friendly match between members, the former being those who resided on the south side of the club and the latter being those residents to the north. The names derived from the presence of large flocks of white cockatoos which fed on maize grown on land in what are now Sherwood and Corinda, and the home of the long-legged water bird, the redbill, was in the Chelmer district. A 1935 newspaper report suggested that 'the talkative ones lead with ten victories against four'.



Cockatoo-Redbill Trophy



Cockatoo-Redbill Day c.1938

In 1955 the daughters of a Patron of the Club, Charles W Scott, decided to perpetuate their father's memory by donating a trophy for competition on 'Cockatoo-Redbill' day each year. Of note is the club's badge which depicts the sulphur-crested cockatoo and the redbill facing each other separated by a bowl and sitting on a base which includes the name of the club. Also in 1921 the club acquired by voluntary subscriptions an adjoining plot of land fronting Wylie Street, but this was not developed until 1934.¹⁶



Cockatoos and Redbills marching in 1945

The Graceville Bowling Club was active in organising social events such as dances, card nights and a concert in June 1921 at the Corinda Hall, with many such activities reported during the formative years of the club. Money raised from stalls, raffles and demonstrations went towards providing furniture and soft furnishings. One event which may cause current concern was a dance in September 1931, a black tie event, where dancing was held on the green in the knowledge that top dressing was soon to be applied. This occurred where normally 'only soft, rubber-shod footsteps are permitted'. No doubt fund raising was rewarded as the pavilion was enlarged in 1929 for a further outlay of £495.¹⁷

Major bowling performances

The 1930s introduced a period of major performances by many of its individual members which propelled the club into the position of being one 'of Brisbane's leading clubs'. In 1932 the Pennant Competitions took the form of Purple and Blue divisions and the club entered one team in each division, but were not successful. However, the outstanding success of that year was the performance of WL Currey, CH Boldery, FE Boldery and HW Boldery who were runners-up in Brisbane in the Australasian Rink Championship. Another member who brought honour to the club was BW 'Barney' Cook in winning the Metropolitan Singles Championship for 1932-33, the Queensland Singles Championship in 1934, and who, with CH Boldery, won the

Pairs Championship on the Darling Downs. Graceville members were also prominent in the Tweed Heads Rink Championship, the Southport Pairs Championship and the Rink competition at the New Farm Club. The club was proud that in the only Queensland Rink selected were two of its members, WL Currey (Skip) and FE Boldery (Lead). Cook, Currey and the Bolderys represented Graceville in the Inter-State Matches and Currey was complimented on being the undefeated skip throughout the series.¹⁸

It was a 'red letter day in the history of the Graceville Bowling Club' on 10 June 1933 as, in the presence of a large gathering of members and their friends, the wife of the Club's president, Mrs WH Arnold, unfurled the purple pennant won for the first time by the club that year. On this occasion Currey and F Boldery received the trophy for the metropolitan pairs championship of the QBA. Currey was praised again as he skipped one of the rinks that won the purple pennant. In July 1933 the Governor of Queensland, Sir Leslie Wilson, was photographed enjoying a game of bowls at the club when his team defeated another at the Thursday game. He was known as the 'sporting Governor' during his long gubernatorial term from 1932 to 1946.¹⁹



The Sporting Governor Sir Leslie Wilson

The Week, 12 July, 1933, p.21, Royal Historical Society of Queensland
Collection

Two additional rinks and bowling fame

In December 1934 two additional rinks each of 20 feet [6 metres] in width adjoining the original green were formed from the acquisition of that land in 1921. The green, which cost about £220, was constructed and ready for play within four months; this was considered a record. The foresight of the club members was praised as in November 1935 there were 80 players and all of the 10 rinks were required. The opening of the two rinks was also the occasion of the

unfurling of two pennants, the Purple and the Green Pennants, won by the club in inter-club fixtures in 1934-35. It was reported that five pennants were fluttering from the flagstaff in 1935 with Graceville Bowling Club being noted for its bowling fame with splendid performances of many individual members in Australian, inter-state and inter-district matches. Of note was the 'great quartette' of EW Boldery, FE Boldery, CH Boldery and WL Currey who 'scooped the pool' in Queensland honours.²⁰

During the 1930s the membership of the club remained at about 90, with a waiting list of potential members and limits being placed at times. In 1936 Council voted to proceed with alterations to the pavilion to a smaller scale than those previously considered. Plans were prepared by R Martin Wilson of Wilson Architects during 1933-35 which included a larger social hall, improvements in the bar and ladies' room and addition of visitor's lockers. The Annual Report for 1936 refers to 'christening the new alterations' with an expenditure of £345.²¹ In 1938, with a membership of 99, the club's accounts showed a surplus of income over expenditure of £46 15s 1d. The club celebrated its twentieth anniversary on Saturday 6 May 1939 with 200 guests attending, among whom were 31 foundation members. It was reported that the club was in 'sight of...being free of debt with all its assets un-encumbered', and a surplus for the year ended 30 June 1939 of £284 9s 6d.²² One notable member of the 1930s still has a presence

in the club. Barney Cook, who gained many bowling championships and was also a noted metropolitan and inter-state cricketer, died at age 65 on 15 March 1944, and his ashes were buried at the base of the bowls club's flagpole.²³ While the Annual Reports as in 1933 usually acknowledged the 'loyal and generous body of ladies' who assisted on social and special occasions, it appears that they were not mentioned as a 'Ladies Committee' until the report of 1935.²⁴

As limits were being placed on membership of the Graceville Bowling Club and at times the number of players was such that the capacity of the greens was not sufficient for demand, there arose the opportunity for another local club to be formed. Hence the original meeting to consider the formation of the Corinda Bowls Club was held in July 1944, play commenced in 1946 and the club was officially opened in June 1947. Graceville assisted in the establishment of Corinda and the affinity with Graceville was maintained when the cockatoo, a part of Graceville's logo, was adopted by Corinda. The cockatoo represented the area of Corinda from which that part of the Graceville logo was created. Similarly Graceville helped establish the Chelmer Bowls Club which was formed in 1954. Their logo adopted the Redbill part of the Graceville logo as the Redbill flourished in the Chelmer area.²⁵

The death of Mr BR Tatham, an Honorary Life Member and Past President of the Club, remembered for his regular donations to club competitions, was reported on 3 January 1947. The following year his

sister, Miss Tatham, gave the sum of £200 for investment to provide an Annual Trophy to perpetuate the memory of her brother, Ben. This was invested in Commonwealth Bonds and the interest earned was to provide a trophy for the annual competition known as the 'Ben Tatham Memorial Fours'. This competition was discontinued around 1990 but in recent years was reinstated as The Tatham Triples which is open to both male and female members of the club.²⁶

Decline in bowling performance

The end of an era was in sight in 1954 when a newspaper heading read 'Graceville face first demotion'. Graceville along with New Farm had never been demoted from the First Division in the QBA pennants since 1934. The club won on that occasion and for three successive years, and for the fifth year in 1937 won the QBA State Fours, formerly called rink, but was unsuccessful in 1954. To counter this disappointment the Treasurer, Mr J Doyle, reported that the year ended 30 June 1954 had been the most successful financially in the club's history. The excess of income over expenditure was £323 13s 6d which enabled the Council to provide for the new fence and retaining wall on the northern boundary without resort to borrowing. At this time the membership was 107 with 15 associate members.²⁷

In August 1954 the President Mr T Straughan stated that the time had arrived for the amenities of the club to be improved. A committee was formed at a Council meeting on 16 August 1954, and plans for

improvements to the Club Pavilion from architects, Hall, Phillips and Wilson, dated 18 January 1955, were submitted on 7 March 1955. A Finance Committee was formed on 14 March 1955 and a meeting was held with the bank to ascertain assistance with a mortgage. The urgency of the improvements appeared to be waylaid by the formation of the Ladies Bowling Club and the sinking of a bore to obtain more water; the latter was ultimately not successful. Not so the Ladies Bowling Club.²⁸

Introduction of a Ladies Club

After 36 years as a gentlemen's club there was a significant change of direction in the club's history when a sub-committee meeting on 27 April 1955 considered amending the rules regarding the admission of a Ladies Club. Of the 54 Metropolitan Bowling Clubs only six were without a ladies' club. The President had met with Mrs Moulard, the Honorary Secretary of the Queensland Ladies Bowling Association, who offered assistance and stated that the majority of Ladies Clubs were not controlled by the Men's Clubs. Council had to take into consideration the extra load on the green, but decided that they were rarely taxed to capacity. The main considerations were that to allow a Ladies Club to function would 'be some compensation for the great amount of work carried out in the past by the wives of members' in organising social functions. It was thought that with the existence of a Ladies Club 'it could reasonably be expected that such an organisation

would be prepared to become responsible for the carrying out of the social activities of our Club.' A memo to this effect was provided for members and notice was given for a Special General Meeting of members on 2 June 1955. Item No. 1 on the business to consider was:

That this club's green, pavilion and other property be made available for use by a Ladies Bowling Club, on such terms and conditions as the Council of this Club, for the time being, may agree upon with such Ladies Bowling Club.²⁹

The formation of the Ladies Club was not without controversy; the President read a letter from Mr CE Radcliffe, dated 3 June 1955, which stated that Item No 1 was *ultra vires* [not valid] of the club's object 2(a). The motion was put and carried by a majority, three members voting against. The new rule, No. 42, was attached to the Minutes.

The inaugural meeting of the Ladies Bowling Club was held on 6 July 1955. The first officials were C Peek, President; K Doyle, Secretary; T Green and O Jones, Vice-Presidents; and M Deakin, Treasurer. The official opening of the Ladies Bowling Club took place on 11 August 1955, with Mrs Lang as President.³⁰

Alterations and improvements to the Club House

After formation of a finance committee on 14 March 1955 in relation to the improvements to the Club House, it was not until 10 February 1956 that Council submitted a recommendation that improvements to the club proceed as per the revised plan that had then been on display for several weeks. The club was given authority to spend 3 per cent of the ultimate cost of alterations and improvements to the Pavilion to cover preparation of plans, specifications and calling of tenders.³¹

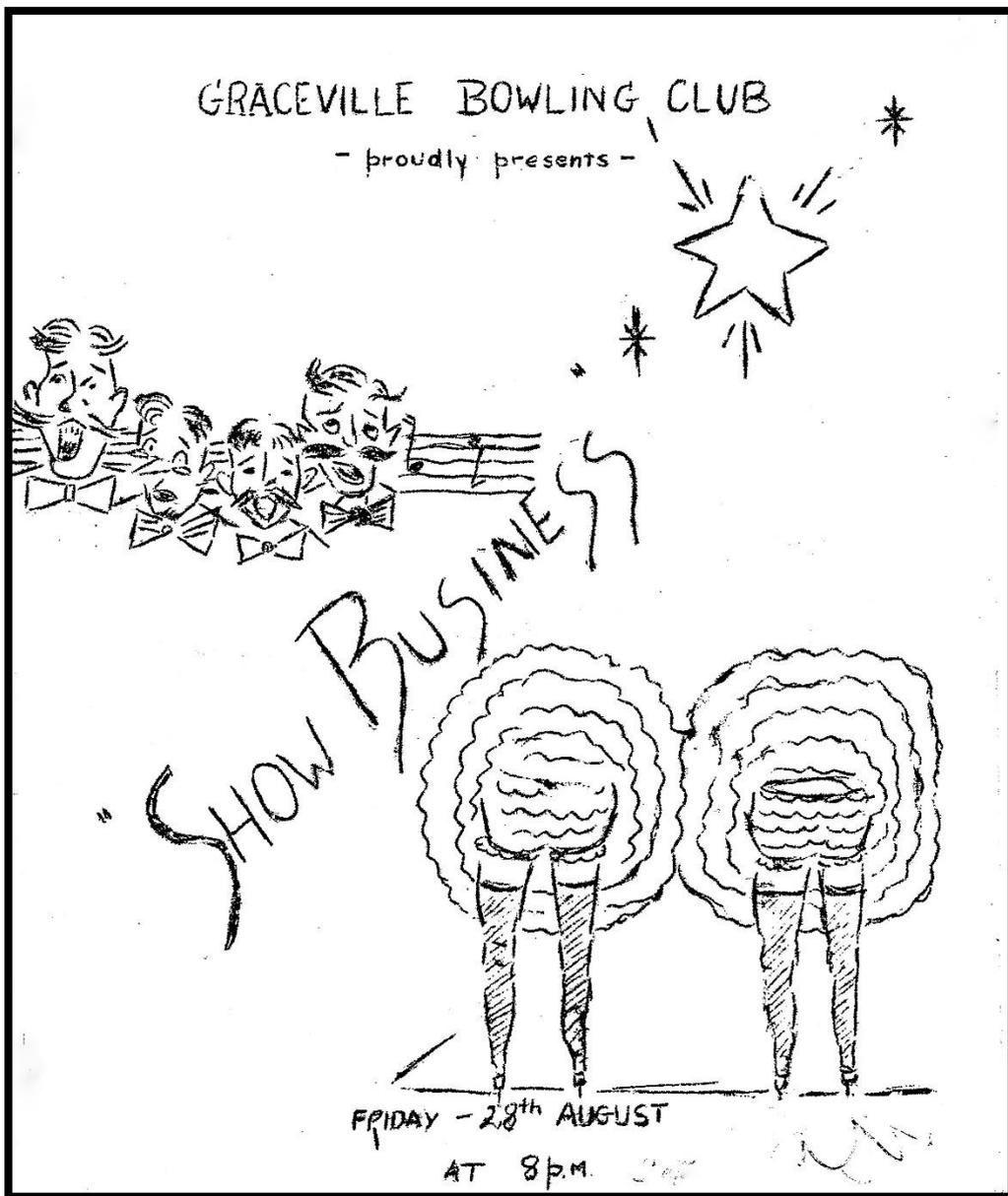
At a meeting on 13 June 1956 a letter from the architects was tabled, which enclosed copies of six tenders relating to the improvements. The lowest tender was £8,217, which was considered beyond the financial commitments of the club. A sub-committee was formed to discuss the elimination of certain portions with a view to reducing the cost to £5,000. Finally, at a Special General Meeting on 9 November 1956 the first item of business, to consider a revised tender for an amended plan from IH and JR King for £5,937 3s, was accepted, with the advance of a loan of £5,000 from Brisbane Permanent Building & Banking Co. Ltd. There were formalities in considering a slight change to the placement of the stairway. The architects then submitted amended plans and a fresh tender for £6,316 16s due to increased costs of wages and materials. The alterations and modifications of the previous plans provided for:

- (a) A stairway entrance to be erected on the western side of the building
- (b) Present front steps and landing to be eliminated
- (c) Front portion of pavilion to be walled in and casement windows to be provided.³²

The 1957 Annual Report states that the improvements included 'the construction of the whole of the lower floor of the Club House in brick, provision for a new bar, septic system, drainage, ladies' room and the raising of the upper story and painting of the building.' The total cost, including architect's fees and additional items, was £6,684 12s 10d.³³

A further item of business on 9 November 1956 concerned an increase in annual subscription fees for members from £5 5s to £7 7s and for associate members from £3 3s to £4 4s as from 1 January 1957. The final item of business related to the terms of a proposed settlement of the case of an alleged violation of Rule 38 [now 13] of the Rules of the Club concerning 'uses of obscene or abusive language', which had resulted in a member's expulsion from the club. This item had been occupying the Council since 30 April 1956 after a member told the President that he 'was not a President's [expletive]'. The member was expelled from the club and his credentials were being questioned at both club and higher legal circles. The member appealed against his expulsion to the Licensing Commission. An appeal was heard on 25 October 1956. The Magistrate suggested a compromise to avoid

further court proceedings. At this Special Meeting in November when, after the Court proceedings there was an agreement of the parties, the terms of settlement recommended that the member's expulsion be revoked. This subsequently occurred and the member resigned from the club.³⁴



More fundraising to help with extensions

From 25 January 1957 the Club Minutes provide information relating to the construction of the new pavilion. At a Special General Meeting on 9 February 1957 it was decided to sell all Commonwealth Bonds and Stock Holdings held in the name of the Trustees of the Club and to Mortgage the club's freehold property to the Brisbane Permanent Building & Banking Co. Ltd for the purpose of meeting the cost of the additions and alterations to the club premises. Other entries related to payments to architects and contractors, slight alterations requested and reference to the installation of a new bar and wall panelling on 2 March 1957; as well as items such as the painting of the complex. The Club House was officially opened by Mr George Foggitt, Vice-President of the Queensland Bowling Association, on 6 July 1957. A picture of the newly restructured Club House did not appear on the Annual Reports until 1961.³⁵

While there is no specific reference to the Club House additions and alterations not having been completed, it was decided at the Annual General Meeting [AGM] on 29 August 1958 that improvements to the Club House were to be completed and finance arranged. The club architect's presented plans and called tenders, the lowest of £3,702 from Tooth and Bronckhorst being accepted. The overdraft was extended to £6,000. The Treasurer reported for the year ending 30 June 1959 that 'the major improvements to the Club Pavilion had been completed'.³⁶

The President's Chair

During October 1959 Mrs Jack O'Connor raised funds towards the purchase of a President's Chair. However Mr Hugh Coben, who designed and built the chair of cedar desired to present it to the club free of charge. The design of the Redbill and Cockatoo engraved on the back of the chair was attributed to Mrs WM Hall.



The President's Chair

The chair was presented at a function in January 1960 where it was placed, as reported in the Minutes, adjacent to the Club's Championship Board, where it stands at the present time.³⁷

Club business during the 1960s

Three other items of interest during this period were firstly, the stress on the importance of singles competition as well as pennants. Secondly, that the Secretary WJ Jones was awarded a Life Membership for his services, especially during the improvements to the building, but for his almost continuous holding of offices from 1940 to 1957. Thirdly Life Membership was awarded to CE Radcliffe who was admitted to the club in 1919 and held many offices and gave valuable service to the club in 40 years of membership.³⁸

The total cost of the improvements to Club House from commencement in 1956/57 to completion in 1959/60 amounted to £10,614 15s 2d. In 1960 this coincided with an 'unprecedented' devastating attack of fungus on the green, giving rise to concern relating to the club finances. A levy of £3 3s was therefore imposed to prepare for any unlikely contingency. It transpired that heavy green maintenance and bank interest charges incurred 'extraordinary' expenditure, but it was reported that this situation was not assisted by the disappointing response of members to fund raising functions. Membership at this time was 111. The green responded to expert treatment and the club finished the year ending 30 June 1960 with a

surplus of £506, which included the levy receipts and a donation of £200 from the Ladies' Club.³⁹

During the 1960s there were various amendments made to the Constitution and Rules, the first being in 1961 with a change to club colours for hat bands and blazers. This was to conform with rules of the Royal Queensland Bowling Association [RQBA], with the colours to be maroon, shade no. 6, and white, which had really been in vogue since 1950 when Graceville had adopted maroon hat bands. The name Graceville was added to hat bands in 1951.



Modern Bowls Attire

The dress code pertaining to bowling clubs has changed over the years. Originally the code was for men to wear light long trousers, white shirt with tie and a dark blazer. Club blazers were available in 1949; the rules were relaxed in 1970 to the wearing of blazers only on formal occasions due to the climate. In 1979 the RQBA ruled that after 1 February, regulation shorts and long socks could be worn except for Pennants. The regulations have relaxed over the years and in 2010 the club introduced a colourful club shirt.⁴⁰

In February 1962 a sub-committee was formed to provide amendments to the rules for the purposes of complying with *The Liquor Acts 1912 to 1961*. Of interest was Rule 13 concerning membership of the club, limiting numbers as the Council may determine, and setting eligibility to 21 years of age; interested in playing bowls; of good repute and character; and free from indebtedness to other clubs or associations. The rules were complex in relation to proposal and acceptance of new persons by the general body of members but certain amendments are still in vogue such as the display on the club premises of the names and addresses of proposed members for at least a week prior their election and not less than two weeks between proposal and election.⁴¹

In 1966 the club endorsed the name change instituted by the RQBA, the name Graceville Bowls Club being adopted on 22 May 1967. At the end of the 1960s the membership peaked at 135.⁴²

It was suggested at the 1961 AGM that the club, being in a healthy financial position, could have another green to spell one green while the other was in use and to increase club revenue. The proposal was again considered in 1962 and 1964. In 1968 it was reported that the overdraft was eliminated at 'long-last', adding to the feasibility of a new green. There was frustration in not making as much progress as the Council had hoped in investigating a new site and also because of the lack of support at social functions which was relied on for raising funds and for social cohesion.⁴³

The Golden Jubilee

The Golden Jubilee of the Graceville Bowls Club was celebrated on 1 February 1969 with a record number of members and visitors for afternoon play and competition followed by high tea in the evening. The guest of honour was Tom Wightman, the sole surviving foundation member who proposed the toast for the celebration.⁴⁴

Development of the Club

At the time of the Golden Jubilee the club was still concerned with obtaining a new green, the Brisbane City Council [BCC] having offered a leasehold site adjacent to Oxley Creek near Pamphlett Bridge which was unsuitable. In the meantime the club was able to negotiate the acquisition of two freehold properties in Long Street West at the rear of the club premises, that of Agnes Corey and George Robinson,

approved by the members on 10 February 1969. This was subject to approval by the BCC which was not forthcoming due in part to objections by the neighbours in Wylie Street and Long Street West. The club lodged a Notice of Appeal in the Local Government Court for not granting consent to the club's application to use the land as described for the purpose of a bowl's green.⁴⁵ The club won the appeal with costs against the BCC. The outlay for the properties was £19,500, \$8,000 for the Corey property and \$11,500 for the Robinson property; one of the properties became revenue productive for seven months. The properties had a frontage of 132 feet (40.2 metres) to Long Street West, adequate for a standard green with banks. The sum of £30,000 was obtained from the Bank of Queensland repayable over 10 years.⁴⁶

The President in 1969, JJ Dale, recalled the words of Past Presidents who thought that the club was 'basking in the reflected glory shed by former stalwarts', with a call for all members to support and to participate in club activities, especially fund raising and with introduction of new members. This was necessary to ensure the success of the future. In this year the club decided to discontinue the singing of the National Anthem on Saturday afternoons.⁴⁷

In late 1969 and early 1970, discussions centred on extensions to the Club House, the settlement of the Robinson property as well as the construction of the green, all of which involved the estimated sum of \$40,000. It was decided that a further offer be circulated to members

either to make a donation or to take debentures with interest free or at 6 per cent per annum payable by instalments as Council desired. A quote of \$12,517 from WA Horne was accepted for the construction of the new green subject to vacant possession being obtained and the removal of the properties, at a cost of \$750 for No. 80, the Robinson property and \$60 for No. 84 Long Street West, the Corey property.⁴⁸



Jim Doyle and other laying turf - Cockatoo Green 1971

Once again club house extensions were on the agenda, and in spite of having plans and specifications for this project, the verbal quote of \$93,000 to \$100,000 was considered not practicable at this time. However, remodelling of the bar was considered necessary, this being

achieved during 1970 with much satisfaction to members and visitors. The official opening of the new 'Cockatoo' Green was held on 20 May 1972 with a record number of players participating. At this stage the membership was 147, comprising 123 members, five life members, three honorary members and 16 associates. It was reported that \$39,954 would be required to liquidate the present liabilities.⁴⁹

Repayments of \$3,000 per year on the advance from the Bank of Queensland placed a considerable burden on the club in 1974. It became necessary to increase the annual subscription from \$20 to \$30 and to impose a levy of \$15 per head on all members, the response to which was 'excellent'. Also acknowledged was the generous financial support from the Ladies Club, which was \$2,000 plus funds from other fund raising activities.⁵⁰ While the bowls club relied upon fund raising activities such as the monthly barbeque and bingo nights, one popular activity of the 1970s was the introduction of the Graceville Bowls Club Players. On the initiative of Vice-President Dean Prangley 'and his band of helpers' a 'very polished and professional' Revue was presented in 1975 which was hoped to be the forerunner of an annual event. For the year ending 1978 the Players excelled themselves with entertainment and fund raising for the club with plays written by Dean and a major Christmas function of a pantomime. This was followed by a Music Hall Nite, reported not only as a 'marvellous social night but the coffers received a healthy increase in funds'.

Funds raised in 1976-7 amounted to \$3,098.70 while this increased to \$3,781.99 during 1977-78.⁵¹



The GBC Revue 1975

Optimism of the Diamond Jubilee

The sixtieth anniversary of the club was celebrated with a carnival in May 1979 which was generously sponsored by the Bank of Queensland. The greens, with 24 teams participating, were at their best and the 'newly decorated Club was aglow with pride', so the day was very successful, both socially and financially. This fostered the introduction of what became known as the Graceville Maytime

Carnival, an annual event played over two days at the end of May. The Bank declined to sponsor the event in 2002; Bennett's Pharmacy came to the rescue with a reduced amount of prize money, but the carnival with 20 teams was still successful. Sponsorship was provided by McIntosh Financial Planning Pty Ltd in 2003. The carnival was discontinued in 2004 due to the difficulty of attracting sponsorship and sufficient players and because of disruption to the yoga and bridge classes held regularly.⁵²

Fundraising was always on the minds of the Council of the Graceville Bowls Club, so there was much appreciation of Vice-President Ian McBain's effort to add to the 'Treasurer's kitty' in 1982 by undertaking the drawing of caricatures of club members which to the present day surround the room near the bar. McBain was a professional cartoonist and illustrator and his 49 sketches raised about \$1,300.⁵³

Challenges of the 1980s

In 1983 changes were made to the Cockatoo – Redbill Day, with the notion of marching considered 'childish', but the day was retained, until 1990, with motifs instead of headbands being worn. The annual reports of the early 1980s stress the age of the club house and the need for a considerable works programme to maintain both the club house and the greens to a standard which would meet the expectations of members. This coincided with a challenge to the club's finances at a time of high inflation and rising costs. By the 1980s

another challenge was club membership as there were 11 bowls' clubs within a five kilometre radius of Graceville Bowls Club. Financially the year of 1984 was not a good one in spite of a membership of 182. A sign of the times was reflected in the sharp decrease of membership to 158 the following year. This was partly due to club matters, such as some members defaulting on their membership dues, and the resignation of others. Another aspect was, as mentioned in the Annual Report for the year ending 1986, that the club 'is located in a demographically dying area'. In April 1985 the club secured a further advance of \$10,000 from the Bank of Queensland to carry out essential club repairs and maintenance.⁵⁴

The watershed years

The years 1986 to 1987 were described as the 'watershed years' regarding the continuing existence of the club. The position of Treasurer at the beginning of this term had not been filled and the President, Bill Beuttell remained in the dual role for some months. Because of ill health he resigned effective from early December and a special General Meeting was called on 4 February 1987 to consider the club's position. Items on the Agenda were the complacency of members, the difficulty of getting volunteers for various activities and the financial position of the club, which was reported as 'running on a shoe-string'. A Planning Committee consisting of Ray Stringfellow, Brian Mealey and Neil Sartor had submitted two reports to Council.

Other activities arising from the February meeting were the introduction of a monthly newsletter, *The Warble*, to keep members informed of club activities; this received accolades from members. There was also a move to streamline the accounting system and committees were set up to seek additional members, to arrange intra-club social activity and to access ways to increase revenue. It was stated that without the voluntary labour being donated to the club it would be unable to exist. However, there was optimism for the future.⁵⁵

The finances appeared to have improved by June 1989, in spite of concern relating to reduced membership. Membership was now 123, a decrease of 22 for the year. Constitutional changes were made during this 1980s period, firstly due to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and in 1989 in relation to the recommendation of RQBA to become an incorporated body. This involved a change in the constitution for the club to be known as The Graceville Bowls Club Inc. approved by the Department of Justice and approved by members. The Ladies Bowls Club became incorporated in 1991.⁵⁶ After a modest profit and incorporation it was decided to clear the club of all debts which involved paying out the remaining debenture holders and settling the bank loan. The 1990 President's Report states that in hindsight this was 'a little hasty' trimming the finances 'to the bone'.⁵⁷

The declining membership since 1985 and the gradual ageing of club members remained a concern and ways to enhance the club finances were on the Agenda. Many clubs were experiencing the same difficulties and had introduced poker machines 'with impressive results'. It was decided, reluctantly, at the AGM in 1992 to proceed with this project and for poker machines to be installed by the end of January 1993. Following lengthy reports regarding the gravity of the club's financial position in November 1993 a Special General Meeting was called for 20 November to alert members to the situation. The President recommended that a committee be formed to advise on the use of the greens and the possible sale of land. It was resolved in December that members over 80 years of age who wished to play only social bowls apply for associate membership with a subscription of \$35 per annum.⁵⁸

The only extant Annual Report of the Graceville Ladies' Bowling Club Inc. is for the year ending 30 June 1993, although over the years the Graceville Bowls Club Annual Reports always mentioned the ladies contribution to the club. This was especially in relation to financial assistance and physical activity of catering and organising socials. In 1993 they had a membership of 55 full members, which included five life members. The issue had arisen many times in the Annual Reports in relation to the amalgamation of the ladies' and men's clubs but was always deferred until the crisis of 1996.⁵⁹



The Kitchen helpers c 1985



Lenore Stanfield and Loretta Moore and the Short-lived pokies

The 1990s crisis

The 1994 Annual Report relating to the poker or gaming machines compared a loss in 1993 of \$2,052, against a 1994 profit of \$1,934. Originally six machines were rented but this was reduced to four in 1994 with the same returns but a saving of \$420 per month in rental. However, the 1994 President's Report contains bleak reading in spite of a successful Turkey Pairs tournament and Maytime Carnival. PG Harrison highlighted the declining membership to 86 and of that number there were only three or four members available for the working party, 10 for the mowing roster, one member to help the greenkeeper with top dressing and at a Friday night social there was an attendance of 14. He also noted the poor appearance of the building and lack of adequate amenities as well as what had been the 'constant liability' of the Cockatoo Green. The President's recommendation was to initiate discussions with Corinda Bowls Club with a view to amalgamation, Corinda having approached Graceville Bowls Club regarding this in 1991, and to authorise the disposal of the old practice green in Wylie Street. The club was suffering from an immediate cash shortage and was 'tottering on its feet'. Notwithstanding the difficulties the club was experiencing, the 75th Anniversary Dinner was celebrated by 70 people on 5 November 1994.⁶⁰

At the AGM on 29 August 1994 it was decided that a 'futures' committee be established to develop detailed strategies for the

continuation of the organisation. This committee to be known as the Futures Group, consisting of Neil Sartor (Chairman), John Kalinowski, Ray Stringfellow and Brian Mealey, was established by Council after the 1994 AGM. The group distributed a questionnaire to members in November 1994, and out of a total of 94 members 22 men and 21 women completed the form. A copy of the futures report was then distributed to members and a Special General Meeting was called for 25 March 1995. This report presented details on the 'Essentials for Success' proposing a set of 'Milestones for Recovery' and suggesting that in case of failure 'to meet one or more of the milestones then the Management Council should initiate action for the dissolution of the club'. Fifty-three members attended the meeting and endorsed the report. Changes to the Constitution were recommended to enable a restructure of the Management Council which allowed better distribution of responsibilities with two year terms for continuity of skills and policies. The need for a membership drive was stressed; other recommendations related to the ongoing viability of the Ladies Bowls Club, improving programs and greens occupancy, strict budgeting and improving essential facilities in the club house.⁶¹

During 1996 the Council decided to relinquish the license to operate the gaming machines which were no longer making a profit. The task of reporting and complying with the legal responsibilities became too onerous for the club and the machines were removed in May 1996. The Annual Report tabled some notable achievements for this year,

including the Ladies Bowls Club contribution of \$8,000 plus green fees of \$3,900 in spite of their diminishing membership at this stage. However, the Futures Group reported that none of the essentials or milestones for recovery had been met which led the Council to recommend commencement of 'an orderly winding up of the Club'. At a Special Meeting of members on 29 June 1996 this motion was amended but the amendment was defeated. The original motion, which required a 75 per cent majority of votes to be carried was then put with 35 votes for the motion 16 against. The motion was declared lost.⁶²

There were no nominations for the positions of President and Treasurer at the AGM on 17 August 1996, these positions being filled at a Special General Meeting on 7 September. At this stage the Graceville Ladies' Bowling Club Inc. faced imminent collapse and negotiations began with the Queensland Ladies Bowling Association and the ladies to integrate fully with the Graceville Bowls Club. A model constitution was approved by the Justice Department and the RQBA and adopted by members at a Special Meeting on 26 October 1996. The ladies club was voluntarily wound up on 31 October 1996 and member's funds of \$9,214 were transferred to the Graceville Bowls Club in accordance with legal requirements. Thirty-two ladies acquired full membership.⁶³ Prior to the formation of the Graceville Ladies' Bowling Club in 1955 there appears to have been a Ladies' Committee, mostly the wives of members, who organised catering

and assisted with social events. Each year they were thanked in the club's Annual Reports. It was not until after the inception of the ladies' club that the group was also thanked for the donations received. It is apparent that the lady bowlers provided financial assistance which became quite substantial and essential over the years. This culminated in the record contribution of \$8,000 in the year prior to their 'winding up' in 1996. It was not until 1994 that the ladies' club appeared as a sub-heading in the Annual Reports.⁶⁴

In the absence of archival documents for the ladies' club, four stalwarts aged from 104 to 77 were interviewed for this history. Iris Andronicos joined the club in 1980 and shared her memories for the period to when, at age 90 she won the ladies' club singles title, and then resigned. With her, sharing their memories was Stella Sheard, Jen Stringfellow and Pam Harding. The women, who were known as 'white leghorns' because of the white stockings as a part of their uniform, confirmed much of what appears in the Annual Reports, that they were the main organisers and largely responsible for all the fund raising. They held very popular Friendship Days with visitors from other ladies' clubs, when cake and home grown vegetable stalls helped with fund raising. Fund raising also took the form of concerts such as musicals by the Verdi Society. The women played on Thursdays; mixed bowls was played once a month on a Sunday, but generally the men's and women's activities were separate. One

person rated a special mention; that was Ethel Arnold, also first highlighted in the 1983 Annual Report, who made 100 scones every Tuesday and Saturday for many years for the men's bowls. The comment was that 'she never made any for the women'.⁶⁵

Sale of Club Assets

For the year 1996/97 the club made a loss of \$7,055 and the Treasurer's Report of 1998 highlights the fact that there had been a continuation of losses since 1966. This was a consequence of steady decline in membership and under-utilisation of the club facilities. The situation was common to many of the nearby bowls' clubs as this sport was losing its popularity nation-wide. It was noted at an Information Meeting on 7 March 1998 that the BCC had been approached regarding the possible sale of the practice green in Wylie Street or the Long Street green. There were some conditions relating to rezoning but otherwise the BCC had no objections to either sale. The process would take eight months and the sale was expected to realise about \$90,000 for Wylie Street or \$250,000 for Long Street. At a Special General Meeting on 9 May 1998 a motion was adopted 45 for and 2 against for the Management Council to undertake the disposal of the property known as the Wylie Street Practice Green but this did not occur at this time. There was a Notice of Motion for the AGM on 12 September 1998 relating to changes to the Constitution that the management and business of the club be vested in a Management

Committee, but the hand written notation states that this was withdrawn. At this date the inaugural meeting of the Men's Section was held; this included the elected officers of the Management Committee, whose names for 1997/8 appear in the Annual Report. However, at the AGM on 12 August 2000 the withdrawal is clarified when the make-up of the Management Committee was subsequently altered to allow more flexibility.⁶⁶

There was no progress on the sale of the practice green in 1999 as there was 'not a real need for funds'.⁶⁷ Prior to the AGM on 12 August 2000 information meetings had been arranged for discussion on the future direction of the club, especially to advise that there had been informal meetings with the Chelmer Bowls Club with regard to potential amalgamation. Ballot papers and explanatory notes were available in relation to the disposal of property with the three options of (i) Lot 18, the sale of Wylie Street, (ii) Lots 5, the sale of the Long Street green or (iii) Lots 34 and 35, the sale of the two eastern-most lots on Long Street. The majority voted for option (ii), the sale of the Long Street green. However, there appears to have been some divergent views with regard to what should be sold and this matter was finally resolved at a Special General meeting on 17 March 2001. The decision taken at the AGM 2000 was rescinded and the vote was now in favour of the sale of Lot 18, the Wylie Street green.⁶⁸

The news was both good and bad in 2001. The members of the Fourth Division pennants team won a closely contested final against Jindalee, breaking a drought of 45 years since Graceville won its last pennant. Adversely, although the sale of property was envisaged to provide funds for the club's long term operation, the latest valuation for rating purposes had increased from \$260,000 to \$950,000. After objection this was reduced to \$810,000 but an appeal was lodged in the Land Court. The appeal was successful and the valuation was reduced to \$540,000.⁶⁹

In 2001 the club moved to dispose of the Wylie Street practice green land with consideration given to various options. Ultimately, to obtain a quick settlement without the need to incur development costs, the land was sold without rezoning at a price that produced a profit that was comparable to what would have been achieved if the club had undertaken the rezoning and sold as a developed lot. In the 2002 Annual Report details were given regarding the \$160,000 capital gain on the sale of the Wylie Street land. An investment advisory group was appointed and the plan was to initially invest up to \$120,000 in a way that the capital invested would grow. There were many demands for expenditure on maintenance and equipment, apart from a \$7,290 outlay on the refrigeration system which suffered a major breakdown in January 2002. At a meeting on 27 April 2002 motions relating to changes to the constitution allowing an increase in the expenditure

limit of the Executive and Management Committees were carried unanimously.⁷⁰

There were positive outcomes for the club in the year 2002/2003 no doubt buoyed by the excellent profit of \$10,627 achieved by the Investment Committee, although this was offset by an operating loss of \$9,826. Membership rose for the first time for many years to 155. The club was successful in obtaining grants to assist with the installation of shade structures, and for a major renovation of the greens with an irrigation system. These involved the need for the club to contribute its own funds towards the projects and affected the club's cash flow. There was still a need for the club to increase the usage of the greens. At this time the Western Suburbs Bridge Club made the Graceville Bowls Club its regular venue. It was reported in 2004 that this provided an amount, before expenses, of \$9,002. A yoga group also used the facilities from 2003.⁷¹ An unexpected windfall occurred in 2004 with the winding up of the Chelmer Bowls Club which resulted in net proceeds for Graceville of \$58,415, with a further distribution from the liquidators of Chelmer of \$18,873. The ladies section of the club ceased operations in December 2004 due to low membership. At the AGM on 21 August 2004 the club was considering the sale of a 16 perch allotment from the Long Street green with funds from the sale to install an artificial green on the remaining land.⁷²

Conversion of the Long Street Green

Ironically the club did not have financial problems in 2005, although it still operated at a loss, but was faced with the problem that too few members were assisting with running the club, with the tasks falling to a small group. There was also the problem of the low usage of the greens, a problem that had been in existence over the latter years but was difficult to overcome. It was hoped that new members would be attracted to the club if greens with a synthetic surface were installed. Notices of Motion were put at the AGM on 13 August 2005 relating to 6.1(a) Conversion of the Long Street green to a 5-rink green with synthetic surface, and (b) Sale of the land RP29431/35, subdivided (subject to planning approval) to wider frontage of up to 12 metres. Bob Hooker and John Toomey were members of the Synthetic Green Steering Committee. While the club had received approval of its grant application to Sport & Recreation Queensland of \$75,000 (plus GST) towards installation of a synthetic green there was still considerable extra expenditure which the club would be required to meet. There was also a time constraint as in accordance with the Funding Agreement the project had to be completed by 30 June 2006.⁷³

A professional firm of Town Planning Consultants, Ken Ryan & Associates, was engaged to provide all the documentation for the Development Application for the change of use of the land which was presented to the BCC on 9 December 2005. There were delays in

processing this application within the BCC and the club had to request an extension of time for the acquittal of the grant which was approved until 31 December 2006. The company who were to install the synthetic green notified the club that the 'carpet was in stock in readiness for installation', but they would be able to comply with the new date of December. In March 2006 the BCC requested a further lengthy submission from the club which again delayed the application. The BCC planning officers recommended approval of the application in October 2006 but the Executive Committee refused the application. An appeal was to be heard on 7 November which meant that once again the club required an extension to the grant as there was insufficient time to complete the project before 31 December.⁷⁴

In a letter to the local Member, The Hon Ronan Lee, who had given assistance in the project, the club outlined the delay that was being caused 'as a result of the opposition to the application by our local councillor'. Representatives of the club attended the BCC Planning Committee meeting on 7 November 2006 where it was requested that they provide a 'written undertaking' that they would not sell off any more property. This request was complied with at a Special General Meeting on 2 December 2006 when unanimous approval was obtained from the members to this effect. In a letter to the Department of Sports and Recreation in January 2007 the Secretary of the club, Neil Sartor, explained that they would not be able to comply

with the latest date of acquittal, 30 June 2007, due to the Development Application to the BCC being 'held up for well in excess of twelve months'. The first instalment of the grant, \$37,500 plus GST that had been paid to the club was refunded to the department.⁷⁵

The club was reluctant to go ahead with the auction of the land, scheduled for 22 November 2008 prior to having the title to the land issued. Notice was received that the Development Application had been approved on 27 April 2007 subject to certain conditions such as appeals. However on 7 November 2008 the BCC requested two further requirements: to remove the two spoil stockpiles and grass clippings from the block of land, and to provide Service Agreements with the power and telecommunications suppliers as evidence that these facilities would be available. The latter added to the financial burden already expended. A comment in one of the emails suggested that John Toomey deserved a medal in reference to the patience required to administer this project. Also heavily involved in this project was Neil Sartor, President in the years 1999 to 2001, Secretary of the club from 2001 to 2012 and present Treasurer since 2012. Neil was awarded Life Membership at the 2009 AGM. The Registration Confirmation Statement (then distributed instead of a Certificate of Title) was issued on 12 January 2009, a little over three years from the first application to the BCC.⁷⁶ In 2008 the decision was taken not to proceed with the synthetic surface and it was reported at the 2009 AGM that the land

had been subdivided and sold. Overall costs were a little more than originally estimated and it was felt that, because of the delays, the club missed selling at the height of the property boom. However they were 'pretty happy with the outcome', which provided a capital gain of \$346,486.⁷⁷

A new era

It was not until 2012 that the club began to recover from the many years of declining membership and continuous financial losses. In 2013 the President, Gordon Dickson, headed his report for the year 'Fantastic' as the club began to increase membership and profits. Dickson became President of the club in the 2008-2009 year, at the time when the Long Street green had finally been subdivided and sold and is still President at the time of writing this history.



Club stalwarts Neil Sartor and Gordon Dickson

During the intervening years profits have increased largely due to increases in membership, with some members added as a result of the closure of the Indooroopilly Bowls Club on 9 October 2014. Profits have also been due to income from functions organised by the social club, and the availability of income from cash deposits and investment which help to offset operating costs.⁷⁸ The present strength of the club may be reflected in a comparison from the Treasurer's Reports: in 2012 the club, for the first time for many years, made a modest profit of \$2,451 while the club in the year to 30 June 2016 produced a profit of \$14,373. The resurgence of the club is also reflected in the membership figures: in 2010 full membership for the year was 58, and in 2016 there were 92 full [playing] members. There is often a reminder in the reports that the future success of the club depends on membership numbers.⁷⁹

Nearly every year in the Annual Reports there is also the reminder that the success of the club relies greatly on the many willing volunteers who attend to the vast array of activities and maintenance that is required. Each year those responsible present a report for publication on such items as the state of play and competition results, coaching, social events and the greens and grounds reports, as well as the Treasurer's report. The state of the greens is possibly the most important facet of the game of bowls, and the Graceville Bowls Club has enjoyed a reputation as having one of the best greens in Brisbane.

While from time to time experts have had to be called to contend with the fungus or algae problems that appear intermittently, often depending on the weather, the records indicate that the greens, especially the original Wylie Street green, has been selected at times by QBA for Interstate matches such as New South Wales versus Queensland in 1955 and for the finals of State Pairs and Country Pairs Championships in the State Carnival during May 1956. In 1979 a major operation occurred of drilling 150,000 1/2" hollow tyne cores into the Cockatoo Green and these were filled with coarse sand. In the following year the green was replanted with Tif-dwarf and this proved very successful then for both greens. This may contribute to the fact that when flooded with rain the water drains very quickly and play can resume. Although not always available, records show the ratings for both greens in 1999 were 8.5. This has been achieved and continues to be achieved through careful management of every aspect of the greens, especially the original green since it was opened for play in 1920.⁸⁰

Although from 2012 each Annual Report states that the club continues to 'live hand to mouth', there was pleasure to see continuing growth in membership, especially with the gain of a large group of ladies. They play regularly on Wednesday afternoons and teamed with Oxley to play Pennants in 2015 and more recently with Corinda. In 2017, the Graceville/Corinda ladies played in the 4th Division Pennant competition, and were delighted to win the flag.



Ladies success 2017.

*A Grant (Cor), R Bennet(Cor), S Greenwood (G'ville), J Blindell (G'ville),
C Schonfeld (G'ville), J Stringfellow (Cor), H Wilkey (Cor), L Bird (G'ville),
A Manion (G'ville), A Gross (Cor)*

There has also been an increase in the number of men playing with renewed success in competition which has been denied for some years. Over the last few years two Pennant teams have been fielded with Graceville Bowls Club Division 3 team winning the flag in the Cunningham District competition in 2012. In the play-off against other District Division winners in South East Queensland at Coolum that year the club lost only one game and finished second in the competition; a considerable feat against opponents from mainly much larger clubs.



Return to success 2012.

*Back: R Carter, M Walker, D Moore, G Walton, J Cotton, W Carey, G Dickson
Front: C Stewart, G Knauer, G Akeroyd, G Shaw, J de Jersey*

Success continues with three Pennant teams being fielded in 2015 with the club winning the Western Challenge Shield, with a second win in 2017.

Since 2014 a Social Committee report has been included in the Annual Report highlighting the rekindled interest in social activities which involve members as well as social members and the local community. These events not only raise much needed funds for the club but have

increased the friendly atmosphere for which the club has been noted over the years. In 2015 the Social Committee, ably assisted by both men and women members, reintroduced the old tradition of the Cockatoos vs the Redbills, an enjoyable game of bowls which culminated in a successful social activity.⁸¹



Cockatoos and Redbills led in by piper Karen Dobeli 2015



The resurrection of Cockatoos and Redbills 2015



More happy Cockatoos and Redbills 2015

This history of the Graceville Bowls Club is largely based on the official documents of the club due to their availability from 1947 to the present, apart from relying for the early period on primary sources such as newspapers. Thus it is a history of the administration of the club. As the request was for a booklet publication it has not been possible to elaborate on the sporting side of the club, the all-important game of bowls. As with many bowls clubs in the area Graceville was very successful in the early period, but has weathered many storms since 1919, and more especially since about the 1980s. Some of these issues were specific to the club due to such phenomena as the ageing of the clubhouse, with demands on the finances. But other matters were outside the control of club management with regard to the plethora of clubs that were established in the western suburbs, and the national financial crisis of the 1980s which seemed to coincide with a decline in interest in the game of bowls nationally. Graceville has been fortunate to have had assets for sale to keep the club buoyant, but since then there has been strict budgeting and management to maintain this position. The club's success has been achieved with the assistance of many loyal members over the years who have given their time voluntarily and selflessly. The present result is a small friendly active club still with many loyal members to sustain it into the future.



A small friendly active club - Special Zero Birthday Party



Graceville Bowls Club members 2017

Endnotes

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